



# A HISTORY OF INDIA

PART III

INDIA UNDER THE COMPANY  
AND THE CROWN

(A Historical Sketch)

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## FOREWORD

THIS sketch has small claim to originality, either in manner or in matter. The ground over which I have but gleaned, has everywhere been tilled by others, to whom my obligations are manifest. My sole care has been to exhibit to students, with the conviction forced upon me by my own reflections, the continuous evolution of the country among whose scholars it is my privilege to count so many friends. Even in this modest aim, limitations of space have compelled me to adopt lines of treatment more conventional than adequate.





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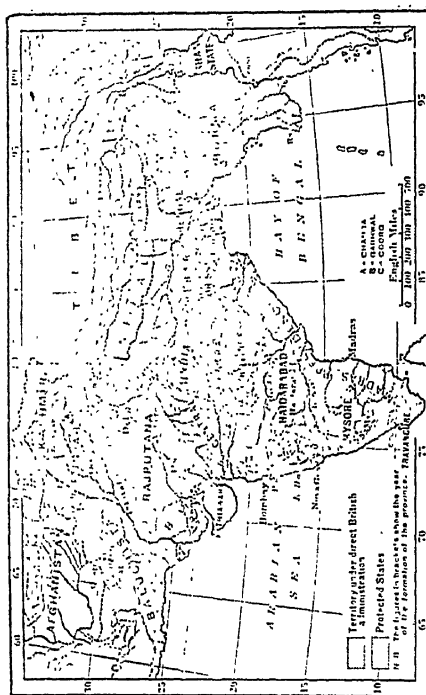
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**MODERN INDIA**

## INTRODUCTION

### The Decline of the Mughal Empire

THE rapidity with which the Mughal Empire broke up after the death of the powerful and autocratic Aurangzeb is among the most significant phenomena of Indian history. During the long reign of the Great King, Indian chroniclers and foreign travellers had combined to testify to the wealth and to the ostentation of the Central Government. And yet, two decades after Aurangzeb's death, the Empire founded by Babur and transmitted as a glorious heritage to his descendants, had fallen into complete disruption.

Since the history of India in the eighteenth century turns upon the factors which caused this remarkable decline, we must pause to investigate them. As might be expected, a close examination affords irrefutable evidence that even in the reign of Aurangzeb, the process of dissolution had already begun. Foreign travellers who visited India in the later half of the seventeenth century were struck by the contrast between the splendour of the magnificent court of the Mughals, and the miserable confusion which characterized outlying portions of the Empire. The French physician Bernier, a trained observer by no means hostile to things Indian, who personally admired Aurangzeb, wrote :

'The country is ruined by the necessity of defraying the enormous charges required to maintain the splendour of a numerous court. No adequate idea can be conveyed of the sufferings of that people. The cudgel and the whip compel them to incessant labours for the benefit of others : and driven to despair by every kind of cruel treatment, their revolt or their flight is only prevented by the pressure of a military force.'

The Emperor and his Secretariat worked early and late to cope with the great volume of business which came before them. Orders were passed, firmans were issued, deputies were despatched. Yet, when it came to executing these decrees in the provinces far from head-quarters, the system broke down. The Emperor was recognized as master throughout his great dominions ; but in actual practice, he could not get his orders obeyed. This was not the fault of Aurangzeb himself, who was a strong man of enormous industry with great powers of transacting business. The plain fact was that the Mughal Empire had grown too great—extension had outrun cohesion. Its organization, elaborate as it may appear when we enumerate the myriads of court officials, was far too primitive to control the vast territory over which the Emperor was nominal sovereign. We may doubt whether any application of administrative genius could have solved the problem ; for the central difficulty was that of slow communication. A despatch from the Deccan might easily take a fortnight to reach head-quarters. Even if an answer could be sent off within twenty-four hours, it would be more than a month before the officer, who had forwarded the report and asked for instructions, could receive them. Inevitably, the Imperial officials in remote provinces tended to become independent of the Emperor. They professed, of course, to obey his orders, but in practice followed their own judgment and pursued their own interests except when their master happened to be on the spot. Being uncertain how long they would be suffered to remain in their posts and knowing that their property would be seized by the Treasury after their death, they made all speed to feather their own nests bitterly oppressing the wretched people under their control. Bernier quotes a Persian acquaintance as saying that these greedy Governors might be termed men who extract oil out of

Adminis-  
trative  
Break-  
down.

sand. No income appeared adequate to maintain them, with their locust-horde of harpies, women, children and slaves. This centrifugal tendency had, throughout the whole reign of Aurangzeb, been increased by several factors. In the first place, the plan by which an Imperial Governor gathered all the revenues of his province, and made his own arrangements for the upkeep of the local administration and the maintenance of the forces under his control, naturally encouraged him to look upon Delhi merely as a distant power to which he paid tribute only when he could not avoid doing so. The gradual concentration of the *diwani*, or fiscal administration, and the *nizamat*, or criminal and police jurisdiction, into his hands increased his authority to a dangerous degree. He kept his own court: he appointed his own officers: he ruled as he would. In the second place, the frequent disputes between members of the Imperial family, as a result of which Royal Princes bought the favour of powerful Governors in pursuit of personal ambition, tended to encourage provincial separatism. Finally, the exhaustion of the central administration as a result of frequent rebellions and over-ambitious schemes of conquest, left the provincial governments stronger, relatively to their nominal master, than they had ever been before. In this last connection, we must remember that the Mughal Empire had from the first been of a semi-military character; and had only held together because the Emperor was able in the final resort to command more men and more money than any of his provincial Viceroys. When this distribution of power was reversed, the Empire lost all cohesion.

The first main cause of the break-up of the Mughal Empire was thus largely administrative. The head-quarters organization was too weak to hold the provinces together. But there was a second set of factors, operating in the same direction,

Political  
Mistakes.

which may be summarily classed as political. In the time of Babur and Humayun, the Mughal Empire had comprised Kabul, the Punjab, Hindustan and Bengal. During the days of Akbar, southerly expansion began. This was rendered possible principally by Akbar's policy of conciliating the Rajput Princes and abandoning the strictly Muhammadan character which had up to his time distinguished the Mughal administration. Akbar's son and grandson continued the policy of friendliness towards the great Hindu dynasties, and by enlisting the loyalty of able generals and administrators succeeded in emulating his career of aggression. Now, it is very doubtful whether the extension of Mughal territory in Akbar's reign added any strength to the Empire. Certainly it laid up a heritage of great difficulty for his successors. Throughout the reign of Jahangir and of Shahjahan, it becomes apparent to the careful student that the Mughal Empire is steadily becoming too unwieldy to be properly controlled from head-quarters. So long, however, as the great Hindu nobles continued loyal, matters remained outwardly satisfactory. But

**Aurangzeb.** Aurangzeb made two vital mistakes. In the first place, he pursued even more rashly than

Akbar the policy of territorial expansion. For years he lavished blood and treasure upon his futile campaigns against Shivaji and upon his useless conquests in the Deccan—conquests which could not be ruled from distant Delhi. In the second place, he alienated the sympathies of the great Hindu Princes and fundamentally exasperated Hindu feeling. At the time when he committed the cardinal mistake of re-imposing the *jizya* or poll-tax upon non-Muslims, he received a protest, variously ascribed either to Rana Raj Singh or to Shivaji, from which the following sentences may be quoted as illustrating Hindu feeling towards his rule :—

‘During Your Majesty’s reign, many have been alienated from the Empire, and further loss of territory

must necessarily follow, since devastation and rapine now universally prevail without restraint. Your subjects are trampled under foot, and every province of your empire is impoverished. . . . In fine, the tribute you demand from the Hindus is repugnant to justice; it is equally foreign from good policy as it must impoverish the country; moreover it is an innovation and an infringement of the laws of Hindustan.'

As a matter of course, there was a great Hindu-reaction against Muhammadan domination. The most prominent example is, obviously, the Maratha renascence the origin of which lies outside the scope of this volume. But in addition, there were insurrections in Rajputana; the Jats raided Hindustan from Central India, on one occasion actually violating the tomb of Akbar and burning his bones: while the Sikhs were tempered by persecution into a formidable militant-faction. And at the very time that this Hindu reaction was in progress, Aurangzeb was squandering the resources of the Empire in warfare against fellow-Muhammadans in the Deccan and elsewhere.

It is for these reasons that the reign of Aurangzeb, though superficially splendid, led directly to the moral and material bankruptcy of the Mughal Empire. Aurangzeb by his religious-policy had stirred up the Hindus to bitter resentment. At the same time, by his political policy he had enfeebled the head-quarters administration. There was thus left to his successors nothing which could be opposed, either to the new national aspirations of the Marathas and other Hindu powers, or to the semi-independent Viceroys and provincial Governors. It is for this reason that in the two decades after the death of Aurangzeb, the Mughal Empire collapsed like a house whose foundations had been undermined. Moreover, his protracted campaigns in the Deccan and Maharashtra had kept him from head-quarters for so long that the

Bank-  
ruptcy  
of the  
Empire.



prestige and efficiency of the central authority alike seriously suffered. After the first twenty years of the eighteenth century, it was not easy even to pretend that India was governed from Delhi. Phantom Emperors still disputed with each other for possession of the throne; but their power scarcely extended beyond the boundaries of the palace fortress in which they then resided.

On the death of Aurangzeb, there occurred the usual fight for the throne. His eldest son, Prince Muazzam, who assumed the title of Bahadur Shah succeeded in vanquishing his rivals. His short reign was chiefly notable for trouble with the Sikhs. The tenth Guru, Guru Govind Singh, after supporting the Emperor's candidature for the throne, was murdered in 1708. Apparently he seems to have bequeathed the military command of the Khalsa to a General named Banda. This soldier attacked the town of Sirhind to avenge the execution of the late Guru's children at the hands of the Imperial Governor, captured it, and put the inhabitants to the sword. The Emperor Bahadur Shah was thereupon compelled to attack his former allies; and after a short struggle he temporarily suppressed the Sikh military power. In 1712 Bahadur Shah died; and again there was a war of succession. Jahandar Shah became Emperor for eleven months; and was then murdered. He was succeeded by his nephew Farrukhsiyar, in whose reign such power as the Central Government possessed fell under the control of the two famous Sayyid brothers—Abdulla and Husain Ali. Finding Farrukhsiyar an obstacle to their plans, they deposed him in 1719 and set up in rapid succession four phantom emperors. These miserable puppets disappeared one after the other, and were eventually succeeded by Muhammad Shah. In order to secure his position, this Prince determined to rid himself of the Sayyid King-makers.



GURU, GOVIND SINGH

Husain Ali was assassinated and Abdulla imprisoned. Muhammad Shah remained titular Emperor from 1719 to 1748.

During this period the break-up of the Empire proceeded apace. In 1722 Asaf Jah, the great Viceroy of the Deccan, was made Wazir ; but as he found it impossible to restore order to the administration, he shortly afterwards retired to his own Vicerealty, where he declared his independence. He founded the important dynasty of the Nizams of Hyderabad, which exists to-day. In the very same year. Oudh became independent under Saadat Khan. Shortly afterwards, Bengal split off, refusing to pay tribute or to recognize the Imperial sovereignty.

The dissolution of the Mughal Empire was accelerated by a process more painful than the peaceful secession of province after province. The tottering fabric, gradually shorn of all its strength, was subjected to a series of shocks by the rising power of the Marathas.

Early in the eighteenth century, the system of government founded by the great Shivaji was substantially modified. Shivaji's grandson Shahu, who had been a political prisoner at Imperial head-quarters, was released by Bahadur Shah. When he returned to his own country, he discovered that his position was menaced by rival claimants. In the course of the struggle, he received valuable support from a Konkani Brahmin named Balaji Vishvanath, who, displaying unusual talents and a remarkable genius for organization, became his Peshwa or First Minister from 1714. Balaji overcame the factions that were threatening

Maratha power with disruption, and erected an elaborate machinery of government at Poona, which from henceforth displaced Satara as the seat of administration. On Balaji's death his power passed to his son Baji Rao I. By the activities of these two able men, the Maratha Government was

gradually centralized. Shahu's descendants, while continuing to retain the nominal title of Raja, became almost as impotent as the Mughal Emperors of Delhi. All ruling power was concentrated in the hands of the Peshwa. Balaji Vishvanath, taking advantage of the troubles at Delhi, had made a treaty with the Emperor Muhammad Shah in 1720 by which the right of the Marathas to levy Chauth or assessment of one-fourth of the land revenue together with certain other imposts, was recognized over the whole of the Deccan. The second Peshwa, Baji Rao, deliberately adopted the policy

**Expansion of the Maratha Power.** of extending Maratha power at the expense of the Mughal Empire. At first he found a formidable rival in the great Asaf Jah; but before long the Nizam and the Marathas came to terms by a treaty which was concluded in 1731. Thus freed from all check in the south, the Maratha power spread steadily northwards. It is from this period that we may trace the origin of the great Maratha Princely Houses whose present day representatives are the Maharaja Scindia of Gwalior, the Maharaja Holkar of Indore and the Maharaja Gaekwad of Baroda. The founders of the first two of these dynasties were officers of the Peshwa Baji Rao, who rose to eminence in his service and carved out territories for themselves from what had once been provinces of Mughal Empire: while the founder of the third was the head of a rival faction whom the Peshwa desired to conciliate. ॥ ॥ ॥ ॥ ॥ ॥

**Achievements of Maratha Arms.** In 1737 a Maratha army appeared in the suburbs of Delhi; Asaf Jah, alarmed lest the whole of Hindustan should fall under their sway, marched up through the Deccan to encounter them. But after an inconclusive campaign, in which the Maratha forces made full use of their superior mobility, the Nizam was glad to make formal cession of Malwa to his antagonists. Three years later, Maratha forces invaded the Carnatic and slew the Nawab.

They were subsequently expelled by the Nizam ; but they continued for some time to press him hard. In 1742 they penetrated into Bengal, defeated the Subadar, Alivardi Khan, encircled Murshidabad and threatened Calcutta. It might well have appeared that nothing could save the bulk of the Mughal Empire from passing gradually under the control of the vigorous and able dynasty of the Peshwas.

But the rule of the Muhammadans in Northern India, despite the weakness of the Mughal Emperors, was not to be so readily overthrown. As had happened on previous occasions when it seemed probable that a united Empire of India would be built up under Hindu control, the balance was suddenly overthrown through the invasion

of a foreign Muhammadan power. Nadir Shah, the brilliant Persian adventurer who had by his military genius overthrown the Safavi dynasty in 1733, determined at this period to subdue Hindustan. After despatching an embassy demanding submission, which was contemptuously dismissed from Delhi, he took the field in person at the head of his veteran troops. In 1739, he advanced by way of Ghazni, Kabul and Lahore until he encountered the Imperial army at Karnal. The Imperial forces were no match for the hardy warriors from beyond the Passes. After his troops had been routed with immense slaughter the Emperor Muhammad Shah surrendered. The victorious invader, accompanied by his royal captive, entered Delhi to arrange the terms of submission. For some time, order was preserved, and the Persian army did no damage. But a rumour that Nadir Shah had been killed led to an uprising of the inhabitants. The Persian King thereupon ordered an indiscriminate massacre of the population which endured unchecked for nine hours. He then proceeded to a systematic plunder of the city. After fifty-eight days, he departed for his own country, laden with the wealth which had been accumulated for

generations in the Imperial city. Contemptuously suffering Muhammad Shah to retain the throne, he annexed all the territory to the west of the Indus. Afghanistan thus passed away even from the nominal control of Delhi.

The tragedy of 1739, which left the Mughal Empire prostrate, might well, had it stood alone, have facilitated the designs of the Marathas. But shortly afterwards a more formidable, because more persistent, champion of Muhammadan domination made his appearance from the dangerous North-West. Nadir Shah had died soon after his Indian exploit; and his dominions fell to pieces. The eastern portion of his realm came under the control of the Durrani Afghan, Ahmad Shah, who began to collect tribute from the Punjab and to threaten Hindustan. An initial reverse inflicted upon him by the Emperor Muhammad Shah's eldest son, Prince Ahmad, made little difference to his power; and after Ahmad had quietly succeeded to his father's shadowy dignities in 1748, the Durrani Afghan obtained a formal cession of the whole of the Punjab. The Emperor Ahmad Shah, a Prince of greater personality than many of his predecessors, suffered a sad fate; for he was blinded and deposed in 1754 by Ghaziuddin, who had succeeded his grandfather Asaf Jah as nominal Wazir of the Empire. In 1756, Ahmad Shah Durrani once more invaded India. He captured Delhi and Muttra amid terrible scenes of rapine and slaughter. He contemplated the permanent control of Hindustan, which he proposed to rule from Kabul, his capital.

But the Marathas could not suffer the supremacy of Northern India, which seemed on the point of falling into their hands, to be wrested from them in such fashion. The first Peshwa, Balaji Rao, after some initial opposition from the semi-independent Maratha chieftains, had strongly

consolidated the power of his Government at Poona. Now supreme in Central India, with their victorious armies threatening every province, the Marathas seized the opportunity afforded by Ahmad Shah Durrani's return to Kabul in the summer of 1757 and occupied the Punjab in 1758. Alarmed by the spectacle of Hindu armies watering their horses in the land of the Five Rivers, certain Muhammadan powers of Hindustan, particularly Shuja-ud-daula, Nawab of Oudh, and the Rohilla Afghans, formed a combination with Ahmad Shah Durrani to dispute the supremacy of Northern India with the Marathas.

This gallant nation was now at its zenith. In the words of Elphinstone, 'Their frontier extended on the north to the Indus and Himalaya, and on the south nearly to the extremity of the Peninsula; all the territory within those limits that was not their own paid tribute. The whole of this great power was wielded by one hand.' That hand, it should be noticed, belonged not to the reigning Peshwa Balaji Rao himself, but to his first cousin Sadashiva Bhao. The Bhao, owing to his remarkable ability, had concentrated under his own control the machinery of Government.

In 1759 Ahmad Shah Durrani successfully re-established his power in the Punjab. Next year, the Maratha Government, having raised a powerful army with artillery and infantry disciplined in the European manner, determined to dispute with Ahmad Shah the supremacy of Northern India. Had the Bhao been content to rely upon his light horsemen, the traditional arm of Maratha aggression, he might well have emerged victorious. But by putting his trust in artillery and infantry, he surrendered the most formidable characteristic of his countrymen when under arms—their mobility. We may notice in passing that the attempt to emulate European methods was afterwards to handicap the Marathas in their struggle with the British; for

**Maratha  
tactics.**

the armies of Scindia, Holkar and the Bhonsla, while formidable enough, could always be brought to action and decisively defeated by the superior discipline of the British soldiers. But the old-fashioned Maratha armies were well-nigh invincible, because their lightness and mobility enabled them to refuse an action except upon their own terms; and in sacrificing these characteristics, the Maratha generals really threw away their best chances of defeating an enemy. The Bhao was perhaps the first great Maratha leader to make this mistake on a large scale. He paid dearly for it: but, as we have remarked, the lesson passed unnoticed.

During the rainy season of 1760, the two antagonists faced one another. The Marathas, who were slightly superior in numbers, occupied Delhi; while the Muhammadan Confederation encamped in Bulandshahr District. At the end of October, 1760, the two armies were in position about eight miles apart on the plain of Panipat. The Afghans by superior generalship succeeded in shutting up the Marathas within a great entrenchment. The Bhao was thus gradually reduced to extremity by want of supplies and forced to fight on conditions determined by his antagonist. Ahmad Shah refused all offers of compromise. He was determined to break the Marathas, and to 'pluck out the thorn from the side of Hindustan.' On January 7, 1761—one of the most notable days in Indian history—the Marathas assumed the offensive. The battle lasted from dawn until the early afternoon, when the fierce charges of Ahmad Shah's Afghans finally broke the formation of the Maratha forces, which crumbled into utter ruin. Since the pursuit was fierce and no quarter was given, the carnage was terrible. The number of Hindus slaughtered was thought to approach two hundred thousand; and nearly all their leaders of note fell on the field. The disaster was reported to the Peshwa—who shortly after-

Maratha  
versus  
Afghan.

Panipat.



wards died heartbroken—in the famous sentence, 'Two pearls have been dissolved, twenty-seven gold mohurs have been lost, and of the silver and copper the total cannot be cast up.' Elphinstone has well summarized the effects of the third battle of Panipat. 'Never', he says, 'was a defeat more complete, and never was there a calamity that diffused so much consternation.

**Its** . . . 'The wreck of the army retired beyond  
**Conse-**  
**quences.** 'the Narbudda, evacuating almost all their

'acquisitions in Hindustan. Dissensions soon 'broke out after the death of Balaji and the Government 'of the Peshwa never recovered its vigour. Most of the 'Maratha conquests were recovered at a subsequent 'period; but it was by independent chiefs with the aid 'of European officers and disciplined sepoys.'

Had it not been for causes over which Ahmad Shah had no control, the whole of Hindustan might have been annexed to his Kabul Empire. But his soldiers mutinied, demanding payment of their arrears, and immediate return to their mountain homes. Thus while Ahmad Shah Durrani had been successful in crushing the ambitions of the Peshwa, he was not in a position to make use of his triumph. The battle of Panipat, though it ruined the Marathas, and extinguished the last remaining prestige of the Mughal Empire, set up no authority which could take the place of those which it had destroyed.

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## Book I.—SEA POWER

### CHAPTER I

#### Some General Considerations

WE have summarily described the ruin which overtook the Mughal Empire in the first quarter of the eighteenth century and have discovered the immediate causes of this decline to lie in administrative difficulties combined with political mistakes. There is still, however, a further factor in the process of degradation which, though difficult to evaluate precisely, is nevertheless of great importance. We may commence by observing that in the early eighteenth century the Mughal Amirs, like the Mughal Princes, were not the men they had been in the early sixteenth century. These Turki-speaking peoples from Central Asia were essentially inhabitants of the temperate zone. When they came to India, they found themselves in a strange climate and in unfamiliar surroundings. In the course of the period between the invasion of Hindustan by Babur and the death of the Emperor Aurangzeb, India had worked a remarkable change upon this ruling aristocracy of Northerners, and, as a study of the admirable court paintings of the period shows, 'ruddy men in boots' had become 'pale persons in petticoats.' Little by little that northern vigour, to which the troops of Babur largely owed their victory over the Afghan soldiery and the Rajput chivalry, was sapped by the climate of Hindustan. Absorbed in the problems of India, the Mughal Empire was cut off, morally as well as physically, from those Central Asian regions which were the real seat of its strength. Success and luxury

weakened the fibre of the conquerors (just as the Indian sun thinned their blood.) Before they had been in India half a century, they stood in urgent need of new recruitment. Yet Nature ruled this out. To control Kabul from Delhi was never easy: to retain Transoxiana was impossible. Further, when the Mughal Emperors were representatives of a settled order, they found it difficult to preserve those cordial relations with the hardy hill tribes of the North-West Frontier which they had maintained when they were adventurous invaders: and the hill tribes were astride the line of communication with Central Asia. As time went on fewer and fewer 'ruddy men' joined the Mughal army. The troubles which broke out on the frontier in Aurangzeb's reign completed the process: and it is to be noticed that in the Emperor's struggle with Shivaji and the Marathas, he could not employ the one class of soldiers who might have given him the victory—the Afghan mountaineers.

It is very interesting to observe that this decline in primitive vigour on the part of the Mughal aristocracy bears a close relation to what has happened in the past history of India. People whose true home lies in the temperate zone, whether in Central Asia or in Europe, have rarely found themselves at ease in the Indian climate. History records many instances in which an invading army of Northerners has felt instinctively that India is inimical, and has given expression to this feeling in open mutiny. Indeed, if we examine the story of Hindustan with an attentive eye, we shall notice traces of a regular cycle in affairs. Time after time, an invader from the north succeeds in establishing an empire in this area by his superior vigour, mental and physical. As years go on this vigour declines, and his empire falls to pieces. The peoples formerly subdued begin to raise their heads and venture to regain their independence. But before long a fresh wave of

**Climate  
and Land-  
Empire.**

invaders sweeps over the land. The indigenous powers are once more crushed by force of arms. A new empire is founded which in its turn goes through the same process, which Gibbon has so vividly described as 'valour, greatness, discord, degeneracy and decay.' It is further important to notice that so long as the invading race can draw fresh supplies of new blood from its original home, in order to supplement the ravages of the climate and the enervating effects of Imperial dominion, its chances of maintaining its authority are increased. But when this recruitment is dried up, a process which inevitably results sooner or later from the difficulty of preserving the long line of land communication between India and the more temperate regions of Central Asia, the end is not far off.

This process which we have described in a fashion so summarily provides a key to much that seems enigmatical in Indian history. We must observe that with the decline of the Mughal Empire, the cycle which we have noticed seems to undergo a change. Henceforward, there enters into the history of India a factor previously unknown; namely, Sea Power. Until the eighteenth century of the Christian era, all the Empires of India had been founded primarily by military, as opposed to naval, mastery. But with the entry of the European nations upon the Indian scene, we begin to notice the remarkable effects of the new factor. In an increasing degree, as the eighteenth century proceeds, are the destinies of India linked up with the control of the oceans which surround her. Because the Portuguese, the Dutch and the French, successively lost their sea dominion, the British stood out at length supreme above their prostrate rivals. Further, it becomes obvious, as the British period of Indian history begins to develop, that the command of the sea gives the new-comers a power of mobility and a security of operation which no rival

whose resources are based primarily upon land-dominion can hope to emulate. More remarkable still, it would appear that sea power automatically offsets the handicap which had so frequently in the past worked ruin to the empires built up in Hindustan by men from temperate climates. For while the control of the sea rests in the hands of the British, their communications with their own home in the temperate zone cannot be severed by any Indian effort. In consequence, exhausted men can be sent back to recuperate: fresh men can supplement the gaps in the fighting line. New resources can be continually brought to bear until opposition is worn down.

From the standpoint of the philosophic historian, there are thus some grounds for regarding the dominion of the British in India as something differing not in degree but rather in kind from the dominion of other powers which had in times past established themselves in the country. The strength of the British lay in a factor of which their rivals had no conception. Indian powers could defeat the British on land; but as Haidar Ali once remarked, it was impossible to dry up the sea. So long as the islanders retained control of this element, they would never be the first to weary in any struggle. Fresh resources, fresh men, fresh energies could always be drawn from the mother country, until the British dominion rested upon foundations too secure to be shaken.

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## CHAPTER II

### The Beginnings

It is unnecessary to recount in detail the history of the early settlement of the British in India, the origins of which are to be found in a period beyond the scope of this book. It suffices to notice that the British East India Company

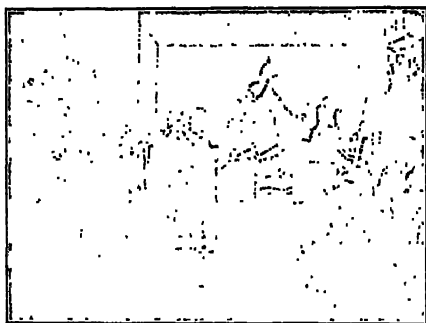
Early  
Settle-  
ments of  
the British.

sprang directly from the triumphs of England on the sea in the Elizabethan era. On the advice of Drake, Queen Elizabeth gave the Company its first Charter. His ideas of the prospects awaiting such an enterprise had been formed in the course of his famous voyage of circumnavigation, and were confirmed by papers captured in Spanish prizes. The English were late in the field; and they found the sea-trade of India largely in the hands of the Portuguese and the Dutch. Their first attempt to settle in Surat failed through Portuguese opposition in 1608; but four years later, Captain Best's dramatic victory over the Portuguese in a sea-fight near the mouth of the Tapti enabled the new-comers to vindicate their claim to a 'place in the sun'. British merchants put themselves in touch with the Central Government, and opened up subordinate agencies at Ahmedabad, at Burhanpur, at Ajmer and at Agra. The Portuguese for some time maintained their opposition; but were steadily worsted at sea. By 1615, the year in which Sir Thomas Roe arrived at the court of the Emperor Jahangir, the English had little to fear from them. Roe's embassy is important, not merely because

Sir  
Thomas  
Roe's  
Advice.

he worthily upheld the dignity of the English nation, but also because he laid down a policy which was to guide the East India Company for three-quarters of a century. He advised his employers to seek their profit in quiet trade; to

maintain no garrisons and to embark upon no land wars. This wise advice, which readily appealed to the natural predilections of a body of merchants, was only abandoned when circumstances combined to render it no longer practicable.



AMBASSADOR PRESENTING PARCHMENT TO MIGHTY EMPEROR

Further settlements of the British soon followed. After unsuccessful attempts to establish a trading centre in other parts of the Coromandel Coast, Madras was founded in 1640.

Trading stations in Orissa and Bengal came into existence from the year 1633; but were for a long time in a precarious condition owing to the unhealthiness of the climate and the fierce opposition of the Portuguese and the Dutch. In 1650, thanks to the efforts of one of the Company's Surgeons who had won the favour of the Subadar of Bengal, a licence was obtained for a settlement at Hooghly. But for many years Bengal, despite its wealth, presented no suitable opening for English trade. Bombay, which had come to Charles II as part of the dowry of his Portuguese wife, was rented to the

Company in 1668; but was for long little esteemed, and employed as an agency subordinate to the factory at Surat.

We have noticed that Sir Thomas Roe advised the Company to spend no money upon garrisons or land wars. Unfortunately, even in the seventeenth century, it was difficult for the English traders to entrust their lives and fortunes to the existing system of local Government. The times were disorderly; the English factories were tempting objects for loot. Accordingly, both in Surat, and still more in Madras, the English warehouses became small forts. The Home authorities remonstrated at the expense; but were confronted by the pathetic plea that the only persons who could safely live undefended in India were those who were 'stick-free and shot-free, and such as could digest poyson.' As the power of the Central Government declined, and the provincial administrations became more and more independent, disorders naturally increased. The internal security so necessary for peaceful trade broke down. Accordingly, the British settlements were exposed to much hardship. On two occasions, in 1664 and in 1670, the great Shivaji plundered Surat. By sheer courage, and at the cost of much hard fighting, the English traders beat him off from their fortified warehouses. Shortly afterwards, the Maratha forces caused great alarm to the English settlement at Madras, although no attack was made at this time. The Fort St. George authorities recorded: 'The sad experiences of all countries and places where he (Shivaji) has used to frequent obliging us to take care for the Hon'ble Company's Fort and estate in our charge, it is resolved to list what Christian soldiers we can get as far as fifty, and what peons as far as 100.' Nor was it only from the Marathas that the English began to experience oppression. Nawab Shaista Khan, the able and

Growing  
Disorder  
affects the  
British.

Factories  
become  
Forts.



autocratic Viceroy of Bengal, placed many hindrances in the way of English trade. Accordingly, in self-defence, the staff of the British factories began to turn their attention to improving their means of resistance. Much against its will, the Company found itself obliged to recruit soldiers to form the nucleus of garrisons. These soldiers were not well paid, and were looked down upon by the civil employees of the Company, with the result that quarrels frequently broke out. But as the disorders in India became more and more marked, the soldiers and their officers acquired a recognized position, gradually assuming responsibility for the defence of the settlements. Before the end of the seventeenth century, the Company's servants became divided into two classes, civilians and soldiers. At the end of 1672, the Madras garrison was put into uniform, partly with the idea of advertising the Company's cloth, and partly for the benefit of discipline. The Home authorities grumbled loudly at the expense involved in maintaining the garrisons; but there was really no help for it when the Law of the Strong prevailed over so large a part of India. Gerald Aungier, who was the first to realize the destiny which awaited Bombay, wrote despairingly of the alteration which had come over Indian conditions: 'The name of the noble Company and of the English nation', he said, 'through our long and patient suffering of wrong is being slighted; our complaints, remonstrances, paper protests, and threatenings are laughed at.' He went on to state that in violent distempers, violent cures must be employed. 'The times

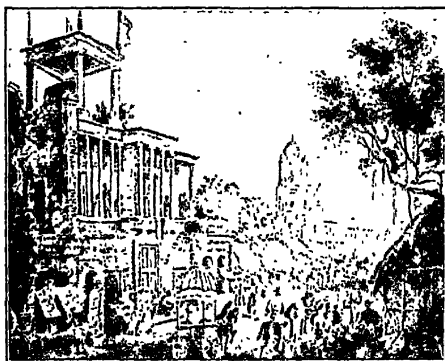
**Disastrous Rashness.** now require you to manage your general commerce with the sword in your hands.'

As a result of these circumstances, the English Company decided upon a dramatic change of policy. In 1688, ludicrously failing to estimate at their true value the immense, though now rapidly declining, resources of the Mughal Empire, they declared war upon Aurangzeb in

revenge for the wrongs which their employees were suffering.

The enterprise was, of course, ridiculous. An expedition directed against Bengal proved a failure ; and the Emperor ordered the expulsion of the English from their settlements. Madras he could not reach ; but Bombay was besieged ; and the English merchants were expelled from Bengal. It might well have seemed that their

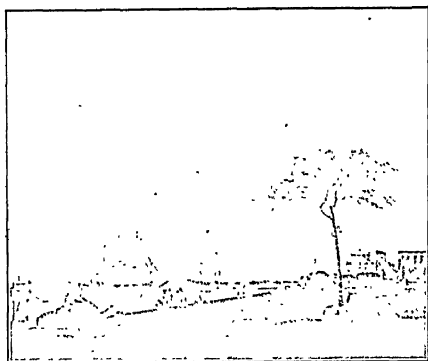
Sea  
power  
shows  
itself.



CALCUTTA FROM A COLOURED DRAWING

prospects were definitely ruined. But in this comic-opera struggle between the enormous Mughal Empire and the puny British factories, the influence of sea power shortly became astonishingly obvious. By land, the Company could do nothing against Aurangzeb ; but by sea they caused him an astonishing amount of active inconvenience. They cut off all trade between India and the West ; worse than this, they rendered the pilgrim traffic to the Hedjaz impossible. Hence, when the Company, realizing that they had made a bad mistake,

put forward overtures of peace, they found Aurangzeb quite ready to listen. They paid a fine, and secured renewed licence to trade. Job Charnock, the Company's Agent in Bengal, returned to build up the settlements ruined by the war ; and was allowed to establish himself on the site where Calcutta now stands—an enterprise which he had twice attempted and twice been forced to abandon on previous occasions. From this time forward until the end of Aurangzeb's reign, the intercourse



CALCUTTA ESPLANADE—SHIPS IN THE RIVER

between the Company and the Mughal Empire was harmonious ; but the gradual process of disruption, which we have already noticed, made the relations between the British settlements and the Central Government far less important than their relations with the local officials and nobility.

The Company's war with Aurangzeb was to have unexpected consequences in England. For some time there had been jealousy between the Company and other persons who disliked its monopoly of the trade of India.

Associated as it had always been with Royal privilege, the original East India Company fell upon evil days during the Great Rebellion. Cromwell, however, supported it; and when the Restoration occurred, it was in a position once more to profit by the patronage of the monarchy. But in the second half of the seventeenth century, opposition to the East India monopoly became stronger. It was caused not merely by trade rivalry, but also by the 'Mercantilist' economic prejudice against the export from England of the bullion required for the purchase of Indian commodities. The Company fought hard for its privileges. The autocratic Governor, Sir Josiah Child—he who was primarily responsible for the war with Aurangzeb—directed the fortunes of the Company for many years, and by an amazing mixture of bribery and highhandedness, long succeeded in securing the monopoly against all competitors. But his rash initiation of hostilities with the Mughal Empire, combined with the complete failure of the new policy of aggression, led to a great outcry. The Company's reputation suffered severely; and its opponents redoubled their efforts. Charges of corruption were established against Child's management: revelations of the most damaging kind were published. In consequence, about the year 1690, the Company's numerous enemies constituted themselves into a regular association; and eight years later managed to secure a grant of the exclusive trade of India when the old Company's last charter should have elapsed. A ruinous competition and rivalry began between the two bodies, which materially lowered the prestige of the British in India. But by the year 1701, it became clear that a settlement was essential, and next year an agreement was reached. Friction still continued between the employees of the Old and the New Companies until 1708, when the arbitration of Lord Godolphin cleared up all disputed points. The position of the amalgamated East India

Company was thus secured at home for many years. This was fortunate, for the death of Aurangzeb was to expose the British settlements to a period of considerable strain.

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## CHAPTER III

### Ledgers and Swords

THE decline of the Mughal Empire on the death of Aurangzeb did not influence the English settlements in uniform fashion. In Bengal, which was comparatively well governed, the shadowy authority of the Empire retained both form and

Fortune  
of the  
English.

substance through the ability of a succession of able Viceroys. In Bombay, on the other hand, the Company soon began to experience the practical effects of the breakdown of the Central Government. There was no longer any power to check the rising ambition of the Marathas. Complete disorder reigned, and the Company's trade greatly suffered. Continual warfare was waged between the English and Kanhoji Angria, who, after having commanded the Maratha fleet, set himself up as an independent Prince. His strongly fortified capital at Gheria was a standing menace to the

sea-trade of the Bombay settlement ; and four unsuccessful attacks were made upon it before

Bombay.

it was finally captured. But one effect of these troubles by land and sea was greatly to strengthen the power of Bombay. By 1757 the garrison amounted to 2,600 men, supplemented by a strong fleet. Such a force was no inconsiderable factor in local politics. Two years later, a treaty was successfully concluded with the Peshwa, by which the Marathas admitted the Company to the privilege of free trade throughout their dominions.

On the Madras side, the Imperial authority, having annihilated the southern kingdoms of Golkonda and Bijapur, had put nothing in their place.

Madras.

Fortunately for the English, two strong powers arose to act as a buttress against disorder. We have already

noticed how the great Asaf Jah established an independent kingdom in the Deccan. Subordinate to him was a strong dynasty in the Carnatic. Had the Nizams been untroubled by political exigencies, their unquestioned sovereignty might well have constituted a serious hindrance to the prosperity of the English settlements; but lengthy hostilities with the Marathas diverted the attention of the Hyderabad aristocrats from the humble trading stations of the foreigner. Maratha raids, as we have already noticed, soon began to approach the walls of Madras; with the result that the garrison was strengthened and the British settlements on the Coromandel Coast were put into a state of defence.

In Bengal, where as we have seen, the authority of the Viceroy remained considerable, the English Bengal. were in a depressed condition. Their trade steadily grew; but they complained bitterly of the exactions levied by the Mughal officers. In 1696, the building of Fort William began; and a prosperous town soon grew up round the English factory. The temporary confusion caused by the death of Aurangzeb enabled the traders to strengthen their fortifications, 'whilst,' as they themselves said, 'no one was likely to take notice of what they were doing.' Further, the decay of the Central Government, and the anarchy of the Delhi Court, seemed to afford an opportunity for the acquisition of fresh privileges. Accordingly, an embassy was despatched in 1715 to Delhi from Calcutta to discover the lie of the land. Fortune aided its efforts. The gratitude of the Emperor Farrukhsiyar to the Embassy Surgeon procured to the Company *farmans* granting them certain villages near Calcutta and Madras, together with formal recognition of the residence of the British in India. But it became plain to the Company that before very long there would be little either to be hoped or to be feared from the Mughal Emperors. The country which they traversed in the course of their journey was everywhere

disturbed ; and in Delhi itself they witnessed a formidable revolt on the part of the army.

But despite the difficulties which the growing internal disorder placed in the way of peaceful trade, the first half of the eighteenth century was on the whole a prosperous period for the Company.

For the first three decades, they had to face the competition of the newly constituted (Austrian) Ostend Company, which was joined by many British traders who disliked the principle of monopoly. Thanks to the hostility both of the English and the Dutch, the Ostenders were ruined by 1733 ; but the Company itself did not disappear entirely until some sixty years later. The records of the East India Company in England speak eloquently of the alarm which the Ostend enterprise inspired ; but from the purely Indian point of view, its settlements never achieved any considerable importance.

It is important to recognize and to remember that in the first half of the eighteenth century, a gradual change began to come over the character of the English factories in the East. Partly on account of the lucrative trade concentrated in these settlements, and partly on account of the success with which they defended themselves against attack, considerable Indian populations soon gathered within their precincts. Before long, Municipal governments were set up in the three Presidencies ; and in 1726 by Royal Charter a Mayor's Court was established in each. The authority of the Presidency Governors was checked by that of the Councils, which were intended to prevent the exercise of autocratic power. This system naturally led to friction, and in times of emergency to inefficiency ; but it was justified by the difficulty and slowness of communication between England and India. Had the Governor or President been invested with the sole executive authority in each settlement, the English Directors of the Company could have exercised little,



control over him. But the principle of determining all important questions by a majority of votes in Council assured the Directors that their interests were being properly safeguarded. The Home authorities were particularly concerned to secure the dignity and independence of the Members of Council. In 1718 they wrote to Madras: 'We appoint them to their stations not to sit as Cyphers; but to have each his Negative whenever they believe they have a just reason.' Instructions were also sent to Bombay forbidding the browbeating or intimidation of members. It is interesting to notice that government by discussion and the formal recording of votes upon questions of executive policy thus made its first appearance on Indian soil in the settlements of the British.

It is generally supposed that the East India Company directorate thought of nothing but pounds, shillings and pence. The criticism has frequently been brought against them that they were harsh, heartless and concerned only with their own profits. But a study of the correspondence which passed between England and India does not bear out this impression. It is perfectly true that the Directors were primarily merchants; but they also had a lively sense of their responsibilities in India. They realized that they held in their hands the reputation of England; and they unhesitatingly announced their intention of establishing 'a well-grounded, sure, English dominion in India for all time to come.' These words occur as early as 1687. They must not be taken to imply that the Company contemplated a career of conquest. But they certainly indicate that the Home authorities were anxious to secure the permanence of the British settlements in India; and as was made plain in subsequent despatches, their idea was to increase the population of their towns and to acquire enhanced authority in the country by the judicious policy of free

trade and orderly government. It would be difficult to better the instructions despatched from home regarding the relations between the Company's servants and the Indian population who dwelt round the settlements. In 1714, for example, we read 'We have always recommended to you to see justice administered impartially to all and speedily, to govern mildly and yet preserve authority. We have reason to add it here again for your remembrance and earnestly to desire you will take care none under you be suffered to insult the natives and that no vile expressions be heard in your streets. This is the best method to enlarge our towns and increase our revenues.' A little later, having received complaints about extortion, the Directors ordered a strict enquiry, and reminded their servants: 'Remember whoever is specially authorized thereunto and doth not act uprightly and heartily in relieving the oppressed brings upon himself the guilt of that oppression which will prove a load too heavy to bear perhaps in this life when his conscience is awake, but to be sure in that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be laid open and all the actions of men's lives accounted for at an unerring and just tribunal.' In short, while the Company laid much stress upon commercial profit, they were far from being blind to the necessity of sound administration. In 1721 the Directors wrote to Bengal:— 'Security of protection and freedom in liberty and property with due administration of justice must of necessity people your territories considering the country about you is under a despotic government.' The consequences of this judicious policy became apparent as the century proceeded. While India as a whole groaned beneath the oppression of predatory armies and chronic warfare, the English settlements grew ever more flourishing. In them alone could security of life and property, freedom from arbitrary dues, firm and just government, be found. It is, therefore, no wonder that

their population steadily increased and that their resources would have astounded the men who, but a few decades ago, had laid the humble foundations upon which a structure so impressive had been reared.

A situation was shortly to arise which would test these resources to the uttermost.

Up to this time the difficulties experienced by the English settlements had been principally due to their relations with Indian powers. Never since their first encounter with the Portuguese, on the very eve of the establishment of their trade, had the English been compelled to defend themselves against a European rival. But in the middle of the eighteenth century the world-wide rivalry between France and England spread from Europe and America into Asia.

It is unnecessary to describe in detail the early history of the French factories in India. We may content ourselves with recalling the fact that the first French organization which succeeded in establishing trade with India on a large scale was the French East India Company founded by Colbert, the great Finance Minister of Louis XIV. The French entered the field comparatively late; and it was not until 1647 that Pondicherry was founded. Some sixteen years afterwards, the station of Chandarnagore was established on the Hughli. But the growth of the French settlements was slow. Throughout the later years of the seventeenth century their progress had been greatly hindered by the hostility of the Dutch, with whom Louis XIV was then fighting in Europe. They contrived to survive at the cost of much difficulty. In the early eighteenth century, matters took a more favourable turn. The French Company shared in the commercial boom which swept over France when Law was Finance Minister. Unlike many other concerns, it emerged after the crash in a strengthened position, buttressed by valuable monopolies.

Differences between the Rival Companies.

The French East India Company was from the beginning a very different thing from its English rival. It was a creation of the State; it depended upon Royal patronage and government subsidies. The control exercised by the shareholders was purely nominal; and the Company was in reality a subordinate government department. Unfortunately, French statesmen in the eighteenth century had very little time to devote to Indian matters. Hence the official character of the French East India Company carried the disadvantages of red-tape, lethargy and lack of enterprise. We may contrast with this condition of affairs the characteristics of the English Company. The English East India Company was from the first a trading organization which depended for its existence upon the initiative of those who composed it. It received help and patronage from Government; but was entirely independent of official control. Its employees in India were active and intelligent men, anxious to push their business and to make the fortunes both of themselves and of their masters. From the very outset the English Company stood upon its own legs and did not depend upon Government subsidy. Until about the year 1730, no one in India could have regarded the French as serious rivals of the British. Indeed, the European power of which the East India Company was most afraid, was the Dutch. Had it not been for the fact that Holland was deeply engaged in struggles on the continent of Europe, in which English sympathy and support was essential for her existence, it is quite possible that she would have been able seriously to dispute with the East India Company their liberty of trade in the East. But from about the year 1730 onwards, the position changed. The power of Holland in Asia depended almost entirely upon her strength at sea. The ruinous wars forced upon her by the ambition of France proved so serious a drain upon her finances that she was

unable to sustain the burden of her activities in the East. Accordingly, as the eighteenth century proceeded, the two European nations whose potential resources were superior to those of the Dutch steadily forged ahead; while the Dutch themselves, though they did not lose much of what they had already acquired, failed to augment their possessions proportionately. In the two decades which followed the year 1728, the power of the French in India greatly increased. This was due to the ability and initiative displayed by two successive Governors of Pondicherry, Dumas and Dupleix. Under their direction, the French settlements in India expanded and grew rapidly. Pondicherry became a serious rival to Madras. Accordingly, when the war of the Austrian Succession broke out in 1744, the French considered that they were strong enough to dispute with the English for the enjoyment of the trade with India. The hostilities which shortly afterwards broke out endured with little intermission until the year 1756.

The exciting nature of the incidents which occurred in the Carnatic and on the Coromandel Coast; and the remarkable achievements of the restless genius of Dupleix, have been responsible for the wide prevalence of a somewhat superficial estimate of the real nature of the struggle between England and France in India. If we are to view things in their correct perspective, we must not forget that even when the power of the French in India was at its maximum, their resources were markedly inferior to those of the British. Their attempt to embarrass the East India Company was practically confined to the region of Madras. They were never able to threaten Bombay; their operations in Bengal were negligible. In fact, all that the French could do with their utmost efforts was to menace the British settlements in India in one region and in one region only. In financial resources, in commercial enterprise, and indeed in every

factor necessary for success save that of military genius, the French were unable to compete with their rivals. They owed such brief success as they could claim to the fact that the English Company, being a genuine trading corporation, could not divert its energies so quickly from commerce to warfare as could the French Company, which was practically a Government Department staffed by professional soldiers and trained administrators. More important still, the French were rarely able to dispute with the English the command of the sea. Since the representatives of each nation were fighting at so great a distance from their own countries, and were dependent for their troops and munitions of war upon their respective fleets, the control of the sea communications was bound in the last resort to be decisive. For all these reasons it is apparent that the importance generally attached in historical works to the duel fought between the French and the English upon Indian soil has been considerably overestimated. We should hardly exaggerate if we were to say that it was impossible for the French to have expelled the English from India unless they had first defeated them in Europe and America. They could, and they did, launch against their rivals a brilliant and disconcerting attack, which was the more formidable since it was directed by a semi-military against a merely trading organization. But they never had a prospect of sustained and permanent success.

The hostilities which commenced on Indian soil as a consequence of the war of the Austrian Succession in Europe, began badly for the British. The feebleness with which a British squadron was handled allowed the French to gain temporary command of the sea off Madras. La Bourdonnais, a French Privateer Captain, had obtained the consent of his Government to embark upon operations against the English merchant shipping. Dupleix,

who was now Governor-General of the French possessions, persuaded him to undertake an attack upon Madras. Since the British fleet was still cruising in the neighbourhood, La Bourdonnais very properly objected to an operation so risky. But Dupleix carried the point; and the incompetence of the British naval commanders enabled him to conclude the enterprise successfully. In September 1746, Madras was captured without serious resistance; although it is probable that the surrender was largely hastened by the fact that La Bourdonnais had promised to restore the town in three months at the price of a substantial indemnity. Dupleix repudiated the promise, and decided to annex Madras permanently; whereupon a violent quarrel broke out with La Bourdonnais, which did much to weaken the French. The capture of Madras was Dupleix's one great success; his forces were repulsed from the walls of Fort St. David and the fleet of La Bourdonnais was destroyed by a storm. A new and powerful British squadron shortly made its appearance in Indian waters, and Pondicherry was subjected to a severe siege. But the local officials of the English Company were still merchants rather than soldiers; and the siege operations were ill-conducted. When peace was declared between France and England in 1749, Pondicherry was still uncaptured. Dupleix was compelled to restore Madras to the English; and had little to show for his ambitious operations.

It will be plain from this brief narrative that the English, even upon the Coromandel Coast, could scarcely be deemed to have encountered a serious danger. It has been said that the quarrel between Dupleix and La Bourdonnais saved the British settlements from ruin. But the fact is that while the command of the sea was in English hands, any success which the French secured could, at best, have been only temporary. Further, as we have already pointed out, the French were quite unable to challenge

Work of  
Dupleix.

the power of the English either in Bombay or in Bengal. At the same time, care must be taken not to underestimate the genius of Dupleix. In face of many difficulties, he had succeeded in capturing the headquarters town of the English on the Coromandel Coast. He could not have expected to do anything more, even if he had been able to remain on good terms with La Bourdonnais. In any event, he would have been compelled eventually to restore Madras to the English, for the simple reason that the matter was settled over his head by the diplomats in Europe. It is said that Dupleix meditated an attack on Bengal after his success at Madras; but since a powerful British fleet had secured to the East India Company the control over Indian waters, such an enterprise must speedily have ended in irretrievable disaster.

The peace of Aix-la-Chapelle should normally have terminated the hostilities between France and England upon Indian soil. In point of fact, this result did not follow. The ambition of Dupleix had been aroused by his realization that small forces of disciplined European troops could, if well led, defeat greatly superior numbers of Indian troops. This discovery was exemplified in the year 1746. We may remind ourselves that at this time both the English and the French dwelt under the nominal protection of the Nawab of the Carnatic. Dupleix had only been able to secure the permission of the Nawab for his enterprise against Madras, by promising to surrender to him the place after its capture. When Dupleix refused to do so, the Nawab Anwaruddin despatched a numerous force to bring Dupleix to his senses. But this large army, organized upon old-fashioned lines, was utterly routed by a mere handful of French troops near Madras. Accordingly, when peace was declared in 1748, Dupleix displayed a strong disinclination to resume his nominal business of trade. He thought he perceived in the



condition of Southern Indian politics an opportunity of building up a far-reaching influence which might prove a formidable weapon if rightly handled. He saw plainly that the French Company could not hope to rival the British either in commercial prosperity or in solid resources; but he believed that by a system of alliances with the powers of Southern India, he might be able to secure his superiority in the political field. As fortune would have it, the death of the great Asaf Jah in 1748 gave rise to a disputed succession. The second son of the Nizam, Nasir Jang, fought with his nephew Muzaffar Jang for the vacant throne. Shortly afterwards, another dispute occurred in the Carnatic. Dupleix determined to set up a rival to his enemy Anwaruddin, and found a candidate in Chanda Sahib. Chanda Sahib and Muzaffar Jang made a compact, and Dupleix was thus in the position of running two candidates for the two most important States in Southern India. At first fortune favoured his plans. Muzaffar Jang and Chanda Sahib killed Anwaruddin in 1749. But Muhammad Ali, Anwaruddin's illegitimate son, claimed the throne of the Carnatic, and threw himself upon the protection of the English. Although the Company's agents in Madras could hardly lay claim to the title of statesmen, they could at least fathom the real aims of Dupleix. If the French Governor-General could place his two candidates upon the thrones they claimed, he would acquire such political influence in the Deccan as might enable him seriously to handicap the prosperity of Madras. Accordingly, in a half-hearted and somewhat tentative way, the English began to support Nasir Jang against Muzaffar Jang, and Muhammad Ali against Chanda Sahib. But Nasir Jang was killed, and Muzaffar Jang became Nizam; while Muhammad Ali was soon besieged in his last refuge, the Fort of Trichinopoly. Dupleix was now at the apex of his glory. He received large pecuniary grants from the new Subadar of the Deccan; was

actually hailed as suzerain of Southern India. Shortly afterwards, Muzaffar Jang was killed; but the French promptly elevated another candidate of their own, Salabat Jang, to the throne. Bussy, the ablest of the French Commanders, accompanied the new Nizam to Hyderabad. For seven years, this gifted officer guided the policy of the Nizam, secured him from enemies at home and abroad, and maintained French influence in Hyderabad at a very high level. But despite the apparent advantages which Dupleix had gained by his able diplomacy, it shortly became apparent that his schemes were destined to be ruined by the crushing inferiority of resources which always handicapped him in his attempts to oppose the British. The English East India Company soon realized that the position, if allowed to drift on, might shortly become serious. Accordingly, they took active steps to throw their resources into the struggle; with the result that in a few months affairs assumed an entirely different complexion. It is from this point that we see dawning from the political firmament of Southern India the brilliant star of Robert Clive.

Robert Clive, a young writer in the Company's service, found himself a prisoner of the French when Clive.

Madras surrendered. Always discontented with the life of the civilian, he shortly discovered that his true profession was the pursuit of arms. He accordingly volunteered for military employment, served his apprenticeship under Major Stringer Lawrence, the exceptionally able Commander of the Company's small forces in Madras, and when only twenty-six years old, held the rank of Captain. It was in 1751, at the time when the English, realizing to the full the formidable implications of Dupleix's ambitious schemes, had determined, somewhat belatedly, to throw their whole weight into the struggle, that Clive gave the first demonstration of his astounding military genius. In order to prevent

the fall of Trichinopoly and the capture of Muhammad Ali—two contingencies which seemed almost inevitable—Clive suggested that an expedition should be directed against the political capital of the Carnatic. In August, 1751, accompanied by a force of two hundred Europeans and three hundred sepoy, he suddenly occupied Arcot without opposition. The expedition was hazardous; for as the historian Orme relates, Fort St. David and Madras were left, the one with a hundred the other with less than fifty men. But the fact that the English held command of the sea was sufficient of itself to justify such a risk. The young Commander made it his first care to put the ruinous defences of Arcot into a condition which could enable him to sustain a siege.

As he had hoped, Chanda Sahib weakened the forces with which he was attacking

**Defence  
of Arcot.**

Trichinopoly in order to capture Arcot. For fifty-three days Clive and his tiny forces sustained a vigorous siege, in the course of which they beat off constant attacks and one determined attempt at capturing the place by storm. The skill and energy displayed by the young Commander, and the devotion which he inspired alike among the British soldiers and Indian sepoy, combined to make the defence one of the most brilliant feats of British arms in India. Disheartened by failure, Chanda Sahib's army suddenly withdrew. Orme thus describes the incident:—

' Thus ended this siege, maintained fifty days, under every disadvantage of situation and force, by a handful of men in their first campaign, with a spirit worthy of the most veteran troops; and conducted by their young Commander with indefatigable activity, unshaken constancy and undaunted courage and notwithstanding he had at this time neither read books, nor conversed with men capable of giving him much instruction in the military art, all the resources which he employed in defence of Arcot were such

'as are dictated by the best masters in the science of war.'

Clive was not content with this exploit ; even in these his early days he displayed the habit which ever afterwards characterized him, namely, of pushing an initial success to the utmost extreme. He defeated the enemy at Arni and Kaveripak. Subsequently, in combination with Lawrence, he relieved Trichinopoly. Shortly afterwards, Chanda Sahib was driven to surrender ; and Muhammad Ali became Nawab of Carnatic.

The genius of Clive and the skill of Lawrence proved decisive. For some further time Dupleix endeavoured to save his schemes from the ruin which now threatened them. But the growing reputation of British arms, sustained almost unchecked despite the utmost efforts of their antagonists, began to undermine the political influence which he had built up with such determination. By 1753 he had been reduced 'very low.' His Generals had been defeated, his allies had lost confidence in him ; his reckless finance was bringing its own troubles. Only in one quarter did the French schemes still exhibit a measure of success. Bussy in Hyderabad continued to enjoy the confidence of the Nizam ; and in 1753 he obtained an assignment of the revenue of the Northern Circars for the payment of his troops. But he was unable in any way to affect the course of events in the Carnatic ; and such financial assistance as he could render to Dupleix was inconsiderable in its results.

Meanwhile, the Directors both of the French and of the English Companies were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the unofficial wars waged by their servants in India. The partisans of Dupleix have maintained that the British demanded his recall and that the French, with great weakness, submitted to the demand. But a study of the original negotiations between the French and the English

**The Real Facts.**

Companies reveals the falsity of this assertion. The French Company appears to have determined to put an end to Dupleix's Governorship on the score that his administration was thoroughly unsatisfactory. It is impossible to acquit Dupleix of practising deceit upon his home authorities. He only reported to them successes ; and left them to discover reverses from other sources. He had involved his masters in enormous financial losses ; and although he had raised the political prestige of France to a great height, he had commercially ruined their settlements on the Coromandel Coast. Accordingly, when Godeheu was deputed by the French Company to investigate the condition of affairs, his first act was summarily to supersede Dupleix and then to negotiate terms of peace with the British. Dupleix and his supporters complained that this peace was a great blunder : that French affairs were beginning to take a turn for the better ; and that Godeheu deliberately threw away all the advantages for which the French in India had so long striven. On the other hand, it is interesting to notice, the British acclaimed the sudden composition of peace as a master-stroke of policy on the part of the French. They held that the terms were unduly favourable to their enemy. And they had right on their side ; for at this time Admiral Watson arrived in India with a strong force on board his fleet, designed if necessity arose, to launch a formidable attack in alliance with the Marathas upon Bussy in the Deccan. Godeheu, in fact, did very well for his nation in obtaining an agreement that neither the French nor the English would henceforth interfere in the quarrels of Indian Princes ; and that each party should enjoy the possessions which it actually occupied. While Dupleix was superseded and recalled, he was not harshly treated. He was allowed to retain *jagirs* which brought him in a large income ; but unfortunately for him, the outbreak of the Seven Years' War, which occurred shortly after the composition of

peace, prevented him from enjoying their revenue. On the whole, therefore, the conclusion at which we may arrive is this. Dupleix, despite the brilliancy of his schemes and the genius with which he put them into execution, had never any real chance of destroying British influence in the Carnatic. The further he proceeded with his ambitions, the clearer did it become not only that their realization was impossible, but also that the attempt was ruining such power as the French actually possessed. If peace had not been concluded by Godeheu, the French would have been destroyed. He was successful in saving something from the wreck ; and he did at least give the French settlements an opportunity to recuperate. But this opportunity brought to them no real advantage, since the Seven Years' War undid his work.

Before proceeding to describe in summary fashion the remaining incidents of the struggle between France and England in the Carnatic, we must turn to the important events which were taking place in Bengal.

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## CHAPTER IV

### The Foundation of British Authority

THE circumstances of Bengal were somewhat different, as we have already noticed, from those which obtained in other parts of India. The rule of the Subadars was comparatively strong ; and under their government English, French and Dutch lived together in peace. Accident, and the foresight of Charnock, had placed the English settlement at Calcutta nearer to the mouth of the river than the factories of the French and the Dutch. The English thus enjoyed considerable natural advantages over their rivals. Calcutta, as we have already noticed, rapidly became an important town.

The relations between the English traders and the Government of Bengal grew worse as the Mughal Empire weakened. The Subadars of Bengal, deprived of the moral support of the Central Government, found it more difficult to sustain their control over their subjects and, in consequence, increased the rigours of their rule. The Hindu trading classes were oppressed by the exactions of the Muhammadan officials and were led to hope for relief by the approach of Maratha armies. Allahvardi Khan, who ruled as Subadar from 1741 to 1756, found himself hard-pressed by the forces of the Peshwa. He was successful in making terms with them ; but in the process his authority was weakened. From about 1750 onwards, the trading and financial classes, who were predominantly Hindu, began to exhibit a growing impatience. Community of commercial interests led to the growth of ties

The  
English in  
Bengal.

The  
Indian and  
English  
Merchants  
combine.

between these classes and the English settlements. In view of these considerations we must be careful not to ascribe the revolution in Bengal to a mere series of isolated accidents. As Mr. Roberts says, 'The revolution of 1756-7 was not primarily or solely the conquest of an Indian province by a European Trade settlement. It was rather the overthrow of a foreign (Muhammadan) government by the trading and financial classes, native (Hindu) and British: both the latter gained commercially, though the British took the predominant part in actual events and alone succeeded to the political sovereignty. The fall of the Muhammadan Power was precipitated by its internal dissensions.' <sup>1</sup>

Up to April, 1756, when Allahvardi Khan died, the discontent against the Muhammadan administration which was characteristic both of Hindu and of British traders merely smouldered. But the succession of the vicious young Mirza Mahmud, better known

**Siraj-ud-daula's Folly.** as Siraj-ud-daula, shortly brought matters to a head. He alienated the great financial

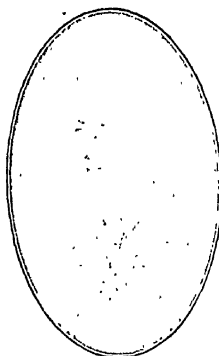
house of the *Jagat Seths*; and he shortly dug his own grave by picking a quarrel with the English. The details of the dispute are not material; but it may be noticed that if the Nawab had been desirous of maintaining friendly relations, hostilities would never have occurred. Siraj-ud-daula appears to have meditated the expulsion of all European traders; he naturally began with the English as being the richest. He seized their factory of Cossimbazar and marched against Calcutta with an overwhelming force. The defences of the Fort William had been neglected; the garrison was utterly insufficient. After four days' siege the place surrendered—a result due in a large degree to the incompetence of Drake, the Governor, and of the

<sup>1</sup> *Historical Geography of India*, i, p. 130.



Commander of the Garrison. A considerable number of the population slipped away down the river in ships; and when the place surrendered less than two hundred Europeans were captured. It is unnecessary to recount in detail the tragedy of the Black Hole of Calcutta. It excited the greatest indignation in England at the time; but it seems to have been quite unpremeditated. Certainly, the Nawab was not directly responsible for the occurrence; and while his subordinates displayed great cruelty, there is no reason to suppose that they were animated by anything worse than stupid callousness.

We may notice that attempts have been made to cast doubts upon the occurrence. Those who maintain that the Black Hole tragedy was a myth rely, first upon some obvious exaggerations in the narrative of Holwell, one of the survivors: and secondly upon the fact that the episode is passed over in silence by one or two contemporary sources. Upon this slender basis an ingenious structure of theory has been built by certain historians, in whom sentiment or self-interest have overborne scientific method.



JOHN Z. HOLWELL

But in the first place,

Holwell was by no means the sole survivor; and other persons, notably Ensign Mills, have left accounts of their sufferings which broadly substantiate the facts. And in the second place, the 'argument from silence', as every historian should know, is notoriously dangerous. By its employment, any schoolboy can

'prove', not merely that the 'Black Hole' was an invention, but that Napoleon was an eponymous nature-deity, that the Norman Conquest never took place, that Asoka was a figment of the patriotic imagination. Any conceivable force which a method so double-edged might seem to possess in the present case, is entirely counterbalanced by the fact that the Black Hole is plainly described in Dutch official records. Now the Dutch, whether at Chinsura or in Holland, were no friends either to Holwell or to the English. Nor were they the enemies of Siraj-ud-daula. Their testimony, in conjunction with that of the survivors, is completely conclusive to all persons trained to the evaluation of historical evidence. No historian desires to dwell upon this lamentable tragedy; the narration of which has been the cause of much heart-burning. But it is equally impossible to pass the matter over in silence, and thus tacitly to acquiesce in the ingenious but utterly futile attempt to write down Holwell's story as pure invention.

Siraj-ud-daula's action in capturing Calcutta might well appear to contemporaries as bringing once and for all to a tragic termination the history of the British in Bengal. But once again we have to observe the decisive influence exercised by sea power upon the course of history. When the news of the disaster reached Madras, the authorities determined to despatch an expedition to avenge the tragedy. Fortunately for them, adequate resources were available. In 1753, Clive had gone home, but had now recently returned to India with the title of Governor of Fort St. David. He had brought with him an ample military force, which was transported on a powerful fleet. The first intention of his employers had been that, using Bombay as his base, he should co-operate with the Marathas in launching an attack upon the French from the West. But before the

Influence  
of Sea  
Power.

enterprise could be initiated, the truce negotiated by Godcheu made the contemplated hostilities against the French impossible. Accordingly, Clive, with the assistance of Admiral Watson's fleet, seized the opportunity of extirpating the pirates' nest Gheria, from which Kanoji Angria's descendants still preyed upon local shipping. Having brought this enterprise to a triumphant conclusion, Watson and Clive sailed to Madras. Clive was at once selected by the Madras authorities to lead the Bengal expedition. He was placed in command of the force of about nine hundred Europeans and fifteen hundred sepoys which was transported by Admiral Watson's fleet.

The Admiral was a gallant sailor, whose share in restoring the fortunes of the English in Bengal has not been sufficiently appreciated by the majority of historians. A worthy representative of the best type of Naval Officer, he possessed strong character, cool judgment, sterling honesty and unflinching courage. Although under peremptory orders to return to England, he decided on his own responsibility to stay and save the situation in India. Rarely has the intervention of the British Navy proved more decisive. In the words of Professor Callender, 'It was Watson who conveyed the punitive expedition to Bengal; Watson who steered the battleships into the Hooghly when the pilots declared the enterprise too hazardous; Watson who turned the Nawab's position from the river, and so effected the relief of Fort William; and Watson whose naval power made possible the conquest of Chandarnagore.'<sup>1</sup>

It was soon obvious that the Clive-Watson expedition would carry all before it. In January, 1757, Calcutta and Hooghly were captured. Siraj-ud-daula was encountered in the field; and

Admiral  
Watson.

Calcutta  
retaken.

<sup>1</sup> *The Naval Side of British History*, pp. 162-3.

## The Foundation of British Authority 49

after a short engagement agreed to conclude an alliance and restore all the Company's privileges and rights. Further, the Nawab promised to pay compensation for the losses inflicted upon the English ; giving them also permission to coin money and to fortify Calcutta. The haste with which this composition was concluded, and the easy terms allowed to the Nawab, must be ascribed to Clive's anxiety lest the French, with whom war had again broken out in Europe, should ally themselves with Siraj-ud-daula. The next step was the destruction of the French power in Bengal. Admiral **The French ruined.** Watson, with great skill and extraordinary gallantry, forced his way up stream and bombarded the enemy's forts from the river ; while Clive co-operated from the land. The French settlement was captured, and the influence of the French Company in Bengal utterly destroyed.

It cannot be denied that at this juncture, fortune largely favoured the British. There was a considerable risk lest Siraj-ud-daula should intervene on the French side, although Clive had managed to secure some kind of promise of his neutrality. But his fear and dislike of the British might well have tempted him to take action, had it not been for the disaster which at this very moment overtook the Mughal Empire. In January 1757, as we have already noticed, Ahmad Shah Durrani sacked Delhi. Siraj-ud-daula was disconcerted by the news of this tragedy ; and not knowing how far the Afghans might push their success, determined for the present to make no open breach with the English. But Clive fully realized that the Nawab's intentions were unfriendly ; and that it was only a question of time before he mustered up his courage to try conclusions with the foreigners. But Siraj-ud-daula's position was far weaker than he imagined. His army was impressive in numbers, but badly organized and ill-led. Worse still, he was without

**Influence  
of Events  
in  
Hindustan.**

friends. Since French influence had been destroyed, the Nawab could not hope for assistance from Chandarnagore. Further, as we have already noticed, the Hindu financial and commercial classes were ready to aid in the overthrow of Muhammadan power in Bengal. The Nawab was personally unpopular, and many influential people who disliked him began to canvas the possibility of dethroning him with the help of the

**Intrigues  
against  
Siraj-ud-  
daula.**

British. A complicated series of intrigues in the court circle led to a secret plot to dethrone Siraj-ud-daula in favour of Mir Jafar, the brother-in-law of Allahvardi Khan. It is impossible to defend the countenance which Clive gave to this project. The only thing that can be said in his defence is that he knew that his people had incurred the implacable hostility of the Nawab: and this circumstance drove him to seek for allies in the conflict which he judged to be inevitable. But he became enmeshed in a most discreditable intrigue which impelled him to a series of dishonest actions. Of these the most notorious was his deception of Amin Chand, a wealthy banker who had become cognizant of the plot, and threatened to divulge it to Siraj-ud-daula unless he was guaranteed a large commission as the price of silence. Clive actually sank so low as to cause a forged treaty to be prepared on the lines of the genuine agreement between the English and Mir Jafar, to which was added a new clause which professed to guarantee Amin Chand what he wanted. Admiral Watson, who throughout

**Clive's  
Dishonour.**

these intrigues worthily upheld the honour of the English name, flatly refused to append his signature to the sham treaty. His name was then appended under Clive's direction. We may notice that Amin Chand, after having been over-reached in this disgraceful manner, continued his relations with the English; lived for several years in great wealth and prosperity, and on his death bequeathed a considerable

sum to the Foundling Hospital in London.<sup>1</sup> The story that Clive's action was responsible for driving the banker insane with disappointment is a pure invention.

Open warfare with Siraj-ud-daula could be deferred no longer. Early in June Clive marched northward with a small force of three thousand men to meet the Nawab's immense army.

**Battle of Plassey.**

On June 23, 1757, occurred the battle of Plassey. The skill and rapidity with which the English guns were handled—always a disconcerting spectacle to the more leisurely artillerymen of India—threw the Nawab's forces into confusion. A panic ensued; Siraj-ud-daula's army fled. In the words of Orme, 'The whole of the English army entered (the Nawab's) camp at five o'clock, without other obstacle than what they met from tents, artillery, baggage and stores dispersed around them, and abandoned by an army which outnumbered them ten to one, and were flying before them on all sides in the utmost confusion.'

The treacherous Mir Jafar, who had agreed to join the English, took no part in the actual fighting; but held off until he saw which side was going to win. When the battle was over, Clive enthroned him as Nawab at Murshidabad; Siraj-ud-daula being subsequently tracked down and killed.

**'The Plassey Plunder.'**

The English officials, Clive included, received enormous sums from the new Nawab as a reward for their services. The Company obtained the *Zamindari* of the 24 Parghanas; which in the following year was confirmed by a Diwani Sanad from the Emperro. Subsequently Mir Jafar presented Clive with the dues which the Company, as Zamindars, owed to the Government of Bengal. And this jagiri income continued to be paid to Clive by the Company until his death in 1774. It is scarcely necessary to say that a severe and

<sup>1</sup> V. Smith, p. 492.

unjustifiable burden was placed upon Bengal finances by the lavish rewards distributed to the English, which amounted on the whole to nearly 2½ million pounds.

Having placed Mir Jafar on the throne, Clive must at least be given the credit for supporting him wholeheartedly. The English Commander quelled a series of revolts against the Nawab's authority; and effectually defeated an attempt on the part of the Mughal Emperor's son—then in rebellion against his father—to invade Bengal in alliance with the ruler of Oudh. Shortly afterwards, circumstances enabled Clive to strike down the only remaining European rivals of the Company. The Dutch, who had a strong settlement at Chinsura, regarded the new power of the British with jealous eyes. A fresh series of intrigues began; since Mir Jafar was not unwilling to play off one European power against another. Despite the fact that the Dutch and English were at peace in Europe, Clive took advantage of an act of aggression on the part of the Dutch—who had recently been reinforced by a powerful fleet—to launch an attack against Chinsura. A British squadron, though much inferior in strength, utterly defeated the Dutch fleet; while Clive's troops defeated the Dutch by land. In consequence, the Dutch submitted completely; withdrew from the field of Indian politics; and from henceforward remained traders pure and simple.

In February, 1760, Clive returned to England, and his place was taken by Vansittart. Although still only thirty-five years of age, he had brought about an amazing transformation in the position of the English in India. Four short years had altered the situation in Bengal beyond recognition. In 1756, while the British settlements were prosperous, their inhabitants had been merely merchants with small territorial rights round Calcutta and a few

Ruin of  
the Dutch.

Clive's  
Work in  
Bengal.

up-country factories. They were considered utterly inferior in resources to the Bengal Government, which treated them in an arbitrary and high-handed fashion. But in 1760, the British were entirely supreme. They had broken the power both of the French and of the Dutch; the Nawab of Bengal was their creature. Their influence extended throughout Bengal and Bihar as far as the southern boundary of Oudh. Their virtual control of one of the richest provinces in India constituted a most valuable support for their operations in other parts of the continent.

It is not necessary in a book of this character to express any detailed judgment upon the morality of the Bengal revolution. We have already noticed the discontent of the Hindu trading classes with the Muhammadan Government; and there can be no reasonable doubt that it was the support of these classes which lay behind the success of Clive's policy. The enormous sums which were given by the new Nawab to Clive and his colleagues produce an unpleasant impression upon our minds to-day. We ought, however, in fairness to remember that presents of this kind were a common feature of public life not merely in India but also in Europe throughout this age. The real objection to the conduct of Clive and of the other servants of the Company, apart from their share in the shady intrigues which resulted in the ruin of Siraj-ud-daula, arose from the handicap which their exactions imposed upon the Government of Bengal. But men are creatures of their age; and it is difficult to judge their conduct save by references to contemporary circumstances. Hence, while it is quite impossible to defend many of the actions of Clive and his colleagues from the standpoint either of abstract morality or of modern conceptions of the responsibilities of public life, we should be careful not to underestimate on this score the qualities which made their remarkable achievements



possible—military genius, coolness, determination and courage.

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## CHAPTER V

### The Ruin of French Power in the South

WE must now revert for a brief space to affairs in Madras. — On the outbreak of the Seven Years' War, the French determined upon another attack on the English settlements in Southern India. They despatched an able officer, the Count de Lally-Tollendal, with a considerable force. He landed in 1758; and since Clive and Watson were away in Bengal, he was successful in capturing Fort St. David. But he was seriously handicapped by his failure to maintain control of the sea. A French and a British fleet fought some indecisive battles; but at the last, the French sailed away and left the British undisputed masters of the ocean. Lally attempted to emulate La Bourdonnais' capture of Madras, and in order to concentrate his forces, instructed Bussy to leave Hyderabad. This step was disastrous; for Clive, whose preoccupation with Bengal affairs did not prevent him from keeping a vigilant eye upon the south, promptly despatched Colonel Forde to march into the Northern Circars. A small British force defeated the French troops which still remained in the Nizam's territory, and captured Machalipatam. French influence at Hyderabad was utterly destroyed; and the Nizam Salabat Jang made a cession of territory to the British, further engaging that he would have nothing more to do with the French. Bussy and Lally quarrelled severely; and the siege of Madras, which was undertaken in December, 1758, was raised in February, 1759, when the British fleet appeared. A French squadron shortly afterwards returned to the Coromandel Coast, but after another indecisive engagement once more retreated. Lally's forces, now

**Ruin of  
French  
Power in  
Hydera-  
bad.**

reduced to a condition of distress, were decisively defeated by Colonel Eyre Coote at Wandiwash in 1760. The French General was then shut up in Pondicherry, which after a severe siege lasting from May, 1760, to January, 1761, was forced to surrender. The fortifications and most of the buildings of the captured town were demolished; and the power of the French in the Carnatic came to an end. Though the town was restored to France by the peace of Paris in 1763, its strength as a fortress had been destroyed; and the garrison was strictly limited by agreement. From this time forward, the French were unable seriously to dispute the British power in India. One more formidable attack was directed by them against the British settlements in 1781-3, an account of which will be given in its proper place. But it is noticeable that the attack on this occasion came entirely from the sea; and its failure was in large measure due to the want of a proper base on the land.

Capture of  
Pondicherry.

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## CHAPTER VI

### Chaos and Corruption

CLIVE's departure from Bengal ushered in a period of great misgovernment. Within the space of few years, the Company's servants in Calcutta had found themselves raised from the position of merchants to the dignity of king-makers. The elevation of Mir Jafar to the throne made the fortunes of many; and, what was worse, excited in others a sudden desire for riches. Far removed from their own country, and from the operation of standards of conduct to which they were accustomed, it is scarcely surprising, though greatly to be regretted, that the employees of the Company in Bengal should have succumbed to the prevailing atmosphere. In

**A Corrupt Atmosphere.** this connection it is necessary to remember that public life in India was, during this particular period, much degraded. The Mughal Empire had become the mere shadow of the name; the Marathas and the Afghans were competing for power in Hindustan. Military adventurers, great and small, at the head of armed bands, pillaged the country and oppressed the people. There was no patriotism; there was no order; there was little honesty. Everyone played for his own hand. Had such a condition of affairs been openly recognized, reform might have come earlier. But unfortunately, the breakdown of administration in India was concealed beneath a structure of pretentious sham. In theory, the Mughal Emperor still remained supreme overlord. In theory, the Subadar of Bengal was his tributary and his representative. In theory, there was a Maratha confederacy, presided over by the descendant of Shivaji, from his secluded throne in Satara. But since, in all these cases, theory did not correspond with

practice, we must not too sharply blame the British for adapting themselves to the system which they saw around them. Had they come forward and assumed the responsibilities which power now laid upon their shoulders, Bengal might have been spared much misery. But to do so would have been to violate current practice. Accordingly, the nominal administration remained in the hands of the puppet Nawab; while real power, divorced from all responsibility, fell to the lot of the British.

Difficulties shortly arose. The treasury of Calcutta was emptied; the English troops at Patna were on the brink of mutiny for want of pay; current expenses could scarcely be met from incomings; and the Bengal settlements were expected to supply money for Bombay and for Madras. The new Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam, invaded Bengal; he was beaten off by the British. Vansittart, now Governor, and his Council, were in desperate straits for money. Being anxious to make some change, they resolved to transfer the administration to Mir Jafar's son-in-law, Mir Kasim, while

Mir Kasim  
Nawab.

leaving the former on the throne as nominal Nawab. The transaction was so unscrupulous that it aroused the protests of many members of the Council. It was nominally regularized by Shah Alam, now a prisoner in British hands. As the price of the business, Mir Kasim ceded the districts of Burdwan, Midnapur and Chittagong to the Company and distributed lavish gratuities to the British officials.

The new Nawab was not incompetent; and might perhaps have ruled satisfactorily if he had been given a chance. Unfortunately, a quarrel shortly broke out between Mir Kasim and the Company upon a commercial question. For some years, the English settlers in Bengal had claimed exemption from all duties for their own private trading concerns, which were carried on within Bengal in com-

'The  
Inland  
Trade.'

petition with Indians. They professed to base this claim upon the *farman* of Farrukhsiyar, which was carelessly worded. The result was an illegal monopoly, much to the prejudice of the prosperity of the province. Mir Kasim protested against a system which deprived him of a considerable portion of his just dues. Finding that he could get no relief from the Bengal Council, he attempted to set matters on a fairer footing by abolishing duties upon the whole of the inland trade, thus placing his subjects upon equality with the English. But the British officials opposed him so bitterly that he was driven into open hostilities. This was particularly unfortunate; for there were some honest men on the Council who were anxious to support him so long as it was possible to do so. In particular, Vansittart and Warren Hastings, at this time a young man, protested against the treatment to which the Nawab was subjected. But his patience being at an end, he took matters into his own hands.

**Hostilities.** He massacred nearly two hundred Europeans who happened to be in his power; and was only defeated after two sharp engagements which drove him out of the province. Thereupon, in July, 1763, Mir Kasim was formally deposed and Mir Jafar once more placed upon the throne. The miserable and decrepit Nawab was obliged to promise to the English the right of unrestricted private trade; and to indemnify them for the damage which Mir Kasim had inflicted upon them. Meanwhile, Mir Kasim fled from Bengal and took refuge in Oudh, where he received the support of the Nawab Wazir Shuja-ud-daula, who happened at the moment to be assisting the Emperor, Shah Alam. The combination advanced upon Bengal in 1764; but were defeated in a very severe engagement at Baxar by Major Munro, who had come from Bombay with reinforcements. The battle was fiercely contested; for Mir Kasim's troops offered a determined resistance. It lasted from nine in the morning until noon; when the victory of the British became

apparent. Far more hard fought than Clive's engagement at Plassey, the battle of Baxar was just as decisive. The Emperor at once submitted; but the Nawab Wazir retreated to his own dominions. British forces pursued him to Allahabad and Lucknow; and all Ōudh lay at their mercy.

Meanwhile, the old Nawab Mir Jafar had died; and the Bengal Council, while elevating his second son to the throne, determined to strengthen their control over Bengal. Accordingly, they secured the appointment of a Deputy Nawab, Muhammad Raza Khan, who was to be appointed on their advice and could not be dismissed without their permission. The new ruler was obliged to leave the private trade of the Company's servants untouched and to make handsome presents to the leading officials. Both these practices had recently been forbidden in the strictest terms by the Court of Directors in England; but the Bengal Council simply ignored the orders which reached them. However, news of what was going on in Bengal eventually came to London; and the authorities of the Company, dismayed by the stories of corruption and oppression which they heard, began to consider the taking of serious steps. Clive, who had been given an Irish peerage and had entered Parliament, had now formed a party of his own at the India House. He was bitterly opposed by another faction; but under the pressure of alarm at what was happening in Bengal, the proprietors of the East India Company's stock insisted that Clive should be sent out at all costs to restore the good name of the Company.

When Clive arrived in India in May, 1765, the situation was most remarkable. The power of the British in Bengal and Bihar had been finally secured by the battle of Baxar. Only three years previously the power of the Marathas had been shattered at Panipat, and Northern India

**Battle of  
Baxar.**

**Fresh  
Scandals.**

**Clive's  
Second  
Term in  
Bengal.**

reduced to confusion. The French were no longer active rivals of the British; and there seemed no power in India which could resist them. Their arms were everywhere triumphant; and the Mughal Emperor himself was living on their charity. Yet greed and corruption everywhere abounded; the administration, nominally conducted by officials of the Nawab, was hopelessly incompetent; while the exactions of the private trade carried on by the English officials constituted a crushing burden upon the prosperity of the territories in which they enjoyed power divorced from responsibility.

Clive began at once to initiate a policy of reform, for which he must be given great credit. If the results were not completely satisfactory, the difficulties in which he found himself involved must bear at least a portion of the blame. He set himself at once to compel the Company's servants to execute the new covenants pressed upon them by the Directors, which involved the renunciation of private trade, and the restriction of all presents within narrow limits. But in the course of executing this reform, it was quickly discovered that the salaries paid by the Company to their servants were utterly inadequate. Hence, while the participation of the English officials in private trade, and their acceptance of presents had been carried to the most culpable limits, any reasonable attempt to supplement their meagre salaries was quite intelligible. The proper course was to have increased these salaries; but to this the home authorities of the Company would not agree. Clive, attempting to make the best of the situation, put forward a plan which should regularize, and secure from abuses, the participation of the Company's servants in inland trade. He instituted a society for commerce in salt, betel leaf and opium, the profits of which were to be shared in regular proportions by the Company employees. This arrangement, while severely censured by the home authorities,

His  
Reforms.



seems to have been the best which Clive could do at the time. It was much resented by the civil employees of the Company, who bitterly opposed the efforts of Clive to limit their operations. At the same time, Clive alienated the military by abolishing the system of extra pay which had become customary since 1757. A dangerous mutiny broke out, which was only quelled by Clive's magnetic powers of personal leadership.

As a corollary to these attempts to reform the Company's finances, Clive turned his attention to the political situation. He saw at once that the root of the misgovernment in Bengal was the divorce of power from responsibility. Unfortunately, it was quite impossible for the Company at this period to undertake the direct administration of the affairs of the province. The Company's servants were few in number; and absolutely ignorant of administrative work. Further, their open assumption of authority as rulers of Bengal might well have involved England in hostility with other European powers.

The  
Company  
as Diwan.

Clive was thus unable to proceed as far as he himself—and later opinion—might have desired. He obtained for the Company from the Emperor the Diwani of Bengal, which entailed the right to collect and administer the revenues of the province. At the same time, the Nawab was converted into a titled pensioner, who received a fixed annual subvention from the Company. We may note that the Emperor gladly entered into these arrangements, because he was guaranteed a share of the Bengal revenues. He was also given the districts of Kora and Allahabad for the maintenance of his Imperial dignity. Clive wisely made no attempts to annex Agra and Oudh, which were entirely in the power of the British. He reinstated the Nawab Wazir Shuja-ud-daula in his possessions (with the exception of Kora and Allahabad) and concluded a defensive alliance with him which guaranteed him the support of British troops when-

ever he consented to furnish the cost of their maintenance.

**Double Government.** The practical result of Clive's negotiations was to make the Emperor and the Nawab of Bengal pensioners of the Company. Further, the Company, which now held the Diwani from the Emperor and controlled the Nizamat through the Nawab, obtained the regularization, according to the current Indian political theory, of the position which they in fact enjoyed. But for the reasons which we have already mentioned, it was deemed more expedient to exercise these functions through deputies. The task of general administration, like that of revenue collection, still remained with officers who were in theory the subordinates of the Nawab but were in practice controlled by two Deputy Nawabs appointed for Bengal and Bihar. It may be noticed, however, that in 1769, English supervisors were appointed to oversee the work of the Indian Revenue officials.

Early in 1769 Clive left India. His achievements had been considerable ; and he had made pecuniary sacrifices. Although he had not thoroughly purified the administration, he had initiated and maintained reforms of considerable magnitude. In the course of his work, he naturally made many enemies, who returned to England and attacked him bitterly. Unfortunately for the Company, his measures did not succeed in securing financial equilibrium ; and in 1772 it became plain that the Company was in danger of insolvency unless British Government came to its aid.

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## CHAPTER VII

### Parliament Intervenes

FROM the middle of the eighteenth century onwards, the historian may trace a growing disposition on the part of the people of Great Britain to concern themselves with Indian affairs. It is interesting to notice that so early as 1759, Clive had suggested in a letter to Pitt that the power acquired by the Company was too great to be wielded by any mercantile organization. He proposed that Bengal should be taken over by the British people. The suggestion struck the statesman to whom it was addressed as premature ; but within a very few years, the British Government found itself compelled by circumstances to concern itself actively in the regulation

**British  
Public  
Opinion  
and India.**

of Indian affairs. There were two principal reasons for this. In the first place, the return to England of men who had made immense fortunes in Bengal tended to increase political corruption. The actual influence exercised by these so-called ' Nabobs ' upon English affairs has been greatly exaggerated ; their historical importance lay in the social animosity they excited ; which in its turn led to demands for the investigation of conditions in which private individuals, without any claim to pre-eminence either in breeding or ability, could acquire fortunes so tremendous. If there were such wealth to be won in India, so opinion in the inner circles of the British Government began to murmur, it was time that the State, to whose military and naval support the East India Company owed the preservation of all it possessed, took a share in the business. Further, at this period we begin to notice the rise of a small number of members of the House of Commons, impelled partly by philanthropic motives and

partly by personal considerations, who espoused what they regarded to be the true interests of the people of India. Despite these various factors, the intervention of the British Government in Indian affairs might have been long delayed, had it not been for the policy pursued by the Company itself. The proprietors of East India Company stock determined, against the opposition of the Court of Directors, to raise the dividends from 6 to 10 per cent in 1766, and from 10 to 12½ per cent in 1767. Government thereupon intervened; made some alterations in the constitution of the Company; fixed a limit to the rate of dividend; and demanded annual payment of £400,000 as the price of allowing the Company to retain its privileges. But financial difficulties

**Financial  
Misfor-  
tunes of  
the Com-  
pany.**

increased. Profits had long been on the decline; partly owing to the expense of maintaining the military establishments in various parts of India: and partly owing to the manner in which the Company's servants devoted themselves to the inland trade—and their own profits—rather than to overseas trade and the Company's gain. Accordingly, in 1772, the Directors found themselves obliged to apply to Lord North for a loan of one million pounds, without which they professed themselves unable to carry on their business. A great sensation resulted; and Government appointed two Parliamentary Committees to investigate the position. The reports of these Committees revealed startling facts. Between 1757 and 1766, nearly two and a quarter million pounds had been received by the Company's servants in Bengal as presents. This sum did not include Clive's *jagir*, the capital value of which represented a further

**Enquiries  
and Reve-  
lations..**

sum of £600,000. From these revelations there grew a general feeling that the East India Company was imperilling the good name of Great Britain by its mismanagement of domains which had been acquired largely with the assistance of

British troops. These Parliamentary investigations produced two immediate consequences. The first was the censure of Clive; the second was the beginning of British legislation designed for the regulation of Indian affairs.

On account of the prominent part which Clive had played in recent events of India, he was naturally the principal witness before the Committee. Many of his actions, including particularly the deception of Amin Chand and his acceptance of immense presents, excited the severest criticism. He defended himself most ably in Parliament by speeches which are still worth reading. His frank and manly bearing produced a considerable impression upon his fellow-members, who rejected a resolution to the effect that Robert Clive had 'abused the power with which he was entrusted to the evil example of the servants of the public and to the dishonour and detriment of the State.' After a whole night's debate a resolution was unanimously carried which, while it noted the sum of money which Clive had received, added, 'Robert Clive at the same time rendered great and meritorious services to his country.' But though Clive was honourably acquitted, the ordeal through which he had passed drove him to melancholia; and in 1774 he committed suicide. We cannot, in a book of these dimensions, embark upon a reasoned consideration of Clive's merits and character. We have to rest content with the brief description, already given, of his most important achievements; which both for good and for evil carry their own lesson.

Despite the sensation caused by the investigation of Clive's conduct, the real importance of Parliamentary intervention in Indian affairs lies elsewhere. Before the resolution specifically attacking Clive had been moved in the House of Commons, that body had committed itself to the doctrine that all acquisitions made under the

Clive  
censured.

Parliament  
asserts its  
Supremacy.

influence of military force or by treaty with Indian princes belonged to the State ; and that all appropriation of such acquisitions to the private emoluments of persons entrusted with civil or military power, was illegal. In other words, Parliament showed itself determined to assert its supremacy over the Company. In the same year, 1773, two Acts of the greatest importance were passed. The first dealt with financial affairs. The Company was granted the loan which it desired ; on the condition that dividends were limited, and that accounts were submitted half-yearly to the Treasury. The second, which is commonly called the Regulating Act, created a new form of Government in India, subordinating the Company to the control of Parliament and laying down the foundations from which the Indian constitution has gradually evolved.

The Regulating Act destroyed the independence of the Company by requiring the Directors to submit to the Treasury all correspondence dealing with Indian revenues ; and to a Secretary of State all matters concerning civil and military affairs, and the government of the Company's possessions. The Directors themselves were henceforth to be elected from the shareholders for four years ; one-quarter of their number was to retire every year, and must remain out of office at least one year before being re-elected. By these means, the whole administration of the Company was definitely subordinated to Parliamentary control through the Ministry of the day. Equally important were the changes made by the Act in India. A Governor-General was appointed for Bengal, with four Councillors to assist him. The decision of the majority of votes was to be binding upon the Governor-General. The Presidencies of Madras and Bombay were to be controlled by the Governor-General and his Council in so far as they were precluded from commencing hostilities

or negotiating treaties with the Indian Princes without the previous consent of the Bengal authorities. The Act also empowered the establishment of a Supreme Court at Calcutta consisting of the Chief Justice and three Puisne Judges.

The practical defects of the Regulating Act were very great. It did not clear up the ambiguities of the Indian situation, because it did not assert the sovereignty of the British Crown in India. As was shortly to become disastrously apparent, the Council of Bengal could readily paralyze the Executive Government by overruling the Governor-General. Further, the Bengal authorities had no real control over the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay, who were specifically allowed, in the case of urgent necessity, to act independently. Worse still, there was great ambiguity as to the position of the Supreme Court. No sufficiently definite provisions were made regarding either its jurisdiction, the law that was to be administered, or its relations with the executive. But although important defects became apparent in the Regulating Act within a very few years; the Act itself deserves to be remembered and to be studied by all who are interested in Indian history. It stands as a definite landmark; not merely because it represents the first effective intervention of the British Parliament in Indian affairs; but also because it is the real starting-point from which the growth of an Indian constitution may be traced.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### The Emergence of Order : The Domestic Reforms of Warren Hastings

AFTER Clive had left India, the Governorship of Bengal was successively occupied by two individuals of administrative experience and mediocre ability. Between 1767 and 1772, it became obvious that the dual system set up by Clive, under which responsibility rested with the Nawab and power with the Company, was quite incapable of checking the numerous abuses which flourished in the administration of Bengal. The Company's servants engrossed the internal trade in many commodities. Bribery and corruption flourished. And

**Misgov-** although the Deputy Nawabs appointed as  
**ernment** heads of the administration in Bengal and in  
**in Bengal.** Bihar were men of strong and upright

character, they were powerless in the face of an unworkable system. In 1769-70 a terrible famine occurred in Bengal, in which it is estimated that no less than one-third of the population perished. Private charity was freely invoked and generously forthcoming ; but at that time the idea that the administration was responsible for straining every nerve to save life when natural calamities occurred, was quite unknown. The British could not have done anything even if they had realized this responsibility, for the simple reason that the administration was entirely under the control of Muhammad Raza Khan, the Deputy Nawab, and his subordinates. He did not concern himself with the sufferings of the people ; and insisted upon the collection of revenue almost in full. It is, however, to be feared that certain of the Company's servants were not



above adopting the current practice of buying up food grains and retailing them at high prices.

**Mis-  
manage-  
ment in  
Madras.** While Bengal was suffering severely from famine, the effects of which lasted almost for two generations, the Company's affairs in Southern India were being sadly mismanaged. After the elevation of Muhammad Ali to the throne

of the Carnatic, his power became for practical purposes transferred to the Company. The result was another regime of double government; the Nawab being nominally responsible for the administration of his territory through his own officers; while in practice power rested with the Company. But whereas in Bengal the battle of Baxar had resulted in the acquisition of a comparatively stable frontier, on the Madras side the foreign relations of the Company were very difficult. In Mysore an able and ruthless Muhammadan soldier named Haidar Ali had built up a powerful military State, displacing the ancient Hindu dynasty which had for long ruled the country. The Maratha confederacy, still formidable through the strength of its individual princes, constituted another danger. Both Haidar Ali and the Marathas had to reckon with the Nizam of Hyderabad, who aimed at the extension of his already considerable territory. Nominally, the Nizam was the ally of the Company; but this did not prevent

**Political  
Situation.** him from intriguing with Haidar Ali and the Marathas, as he imagined his interests dictated. In 1767 an alliance between the three

Indian powers was defeated by British troops; but next year the foundations of future trouble were laid by a peace with the Nizam which entailed the hostility of Haidar Ali. Fighting continued for the next two years. The British utterly mismanaged both their warfare and their diplomacy. And Haidar Ali was able to obtain peace almost on his own terms in 1769. This treaty provided for the mutual restitution of conquests and

bound each party to come to the assistance of the other if it were attacked by a third power. How the Madras authorities could have committed themselves, in the face of the Directors' express instructions, to a provision of this sort passes understanding ; but it argues both inefficiency and roguery on the part of the Company's servants. The natural consequence became shortly apparent. Two years later, when the Marathas invaded Mysore, Haidar Ali applied for British help. The Madras authorities made excuses ; with the result that they earned the discredit of breaking a treaty ; and incurred the hostility of a relentless foe.

Fortunately, at this moment, a strong man took charge of the Government in Bengal. Warren Hastings, one of the few men who had emerged with clean hands from the melancholy episodes of the Bengal revolution, was appointed to succeed Cartier as Governor in 1772. He enjoyed the unbroken confidence of the Directors, who had great faith in his ability and disinterestedness. In view of the criticisms which have been so frequently levelled against his personal character, it is worth while to remember, from the first moment when we encounter his name upon the page of the history, that until 1774, when he was brought into conflict with Philip Francis, his integrity had never been impugned. At the time when the British Government was deeply concerned with the corruption of the Company's administration in India, and was doing all that lay in its power to set matters upon a better footing, Warren Hastings appeared to be the one man worthy of selection for the responsible post of Governor-General. Lord North, in speaking upon the Regulating Act, stated in the House that ' He should propose a person who, though flesh and blood, had resisted the greatest temptations—that ' though filling great offices in Bengal during the various ' revolutions that had been felt in that country, never

Rise of  
Warren  
Hastings.

'received a single rupee at any one of them, and whose abilities and intense application would be apparent to any gentleman who would consider what he had done during the first six months of his administration.' It seems perfectly plain, as Mr. Vincent Smith remarks, that the man who had earned such praises by twenty-three years' faithful service, could not possibly have become within the next few months the corrupt tyrant depicted in the libels emanating from the spite of Philip Francis. We shall find much in Warren Hastings' conduct to question; and much to condemn. But we shall find on the whole very little support for the views put forward in the glittering prose of Macaulay or in the unbalanced rhetoric of Burke.

We have now to consider the condition of affairs which faced Warren Hastings when he became Governor of Bengal in 1772.

Earlier historians have been led by the dramatic episodes of his impeachment and trial to concentrate their attention rather upon the later period of his administration. But recent historical research has proved conclusively that Hastings' greatest work was performed during his first two years of Governorship—that is to say, while he still enjoyed considerable power; and when he was not embarrassed by the unworkable restrictions which the Regulating Act imposed upon him. The situation was extremely difficult. A purely mercantile community, ignorant of the customs and the social habits of the peoples over whom it exercised power, was now forced by circumstances to step into the place of a decaying government. Hastings found himself obliged to embark upon a fundamental reorganization of the entire State. He had to place the officials under control; to rehabilitate the system of finance; to establish judicial protection; and to restore the security of person and property.

**His First  
Adminis-  
tration.**

## Emergence of Order : Domestic Reforms 73

The first step was to abolish the dual system of government established by Clive, which had by this time proved itself thoroughly unworkable. The Nizamat had ceased to function in practice owing to the impotence of the Nawab.

The Diwani, exercised through deputies virtually appointed by the Company, was in a state of confusion. English supervisors appointed to overlook the operations of the Indian Revenue officials were ignorant of the language and the customs of the country, eager only to enrich themselves, and utterly in the hands of their Bengali men of business. So unsatisfactory was this system that the Company resolved to take a bold step, and to 'stand forth as Dewan.' The Directors were probably urged to this course by observing the contrast between the prosperity of the districts of Burdwan, Midnapore and Chittagong, where the revenue work was actually carried on by their own officers, and the misery characterizing the rest of Bengal. Accordingly, the Deputy Nawabs of Bengal and Bihar, Muhammad Raza Khan and Maharaja Shitab Rai, who really controlled such administrative machinery as still existed, were removed from their office, and put on their trial for embezzlement. Hastings strongly protested, for he knew that both were honest. But the orders of the Directors were unyielding. After being tried on a number of charges put forward by Nand Kumar and other of their unscrupulous enemies, both officers were honourably acquitted. But their posts were abolished, being superseded by a Board of Revenue with its seat at Calcutta. Hastings was now able to effect a number of valuable economies. The titular Nawab of Bengal was given a reduced subsidy; but as he was at the same time relieved from the necessity of maintaining a number of sinecure offices, he actually enjoyed a larger net income. The greatest achievement of Hastings' administration was the syste-

matic manner in which he tackled the problem of land revenue. He carried out a quinquennial settlement; and appointed English officials, now for the first time called 'Collectors,' with competent Indian assistants, to superintend the districts. At first it was uphill work; the English officials were quite untrained; and the confusion which they had to face was enormous. But by degrees the work was done; and Bengal as a whole began to approach the level of administration in the districts of Burdwan, Midnapore and Chittagong. The Company's determination to discharge the functions of Diwan enabled order to be introduced into the administration of civil justice. The Collectors, as heads of the districts, became responsible for dispensing civil law. Indian officials, in accordance with the theory of the Nizamat, still presided over the criminal courts. Hastings laid the foundations of a better system of justice by setting up a supreme civil court and a supreme criminal court in Calcutta. As a result of this policy of reforms, clearly envisaged and carried out with inflexible firmness and honesty, Hastings introduced the beginnings of order into the civil administration. At the same time, he gradually suppressed the anarchy which distracted the countryside. He put down the ravages of the *sanyasi* bands who wandered about committing depredations. He suppressed dacoity; and endeavoured to secure the strict administration of the criminal law.

The magnitude of Hastings' achievements in his first two years of Governorship will be better appreciated when it is realized that he had by no means a free hand in carrying them out. In the first place, he was much hampered by the orders of the Directors; who did not clearly understand the situation of Bengal; and were continually demanding financial relief for the difficulties in which the settlements of Bombay and Madras were at

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Settle-  
ment.

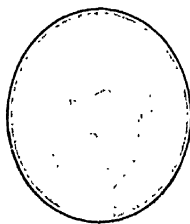
Difficul-  
ties of  
Hastings.

this time involved. But in addition, foreign relations caused Hastings much anxiety. The Marathas had now recovered to a large extent from their disastrous defeat at Panipat in 1761. They were once more raiding Rajputana and Rohilkhand, and were supreme round Delhi. Realizing that the exiled Emperor would be a valuable political tool in their hands, they offered to restore him to his throne. Despite the advice of the British, Shah Alam decided to accept the offer; and in December, 1771, was escorted to his capital by Scindia. Naturally, he became a mere creature in the hands of his captors, and was shortly compelled to make over to the Marathas his districts of Kora and Allahabad. Hastings declined to allow their revenue to fall into Maratha hands, and preferred to restore them to the Nawab-Wazir. A new treaty was made between the Company and Shuja-ud-daula by which the latter agreed to pay fifty lakhs of rupees for the restoration of the two districts, and to entertain a garrison of the Company's troops. This agreement, which was ratified by the treaty of Benares in 1773, led directly to the intervention of Hastings in the Rohilla war.

The facts are briefly these: A Rohilla aristocracy consisting largely of Yusufzai Afghans, had settled themselves a short while before in the country still called Rohilkhand. Their relations with the Nawab-Wazir were not cordial; and a tripartite intrigue began from about the year 1770 onwards between Oudh, the Rohillas and the Marathas. In June, 1772, a treaty was concluded between the Rohillas and Oudh by which the Nawab-Wazir engaged to defend Rohilkhand in the event of a Maratha invasion, at the price of forty lakhs of rupees. Next year, the invasion occurred and the Nawab-Wazir maintained that he had performed his part of the contract. But the Rohilla confederacy, presided over by Hafiz Rahmat Khan, evaded payment. Shuja-ud-daula thereupon

**The  
Rohilla  
War.**

proposed to the English that in return for a large subsidy, they should lend him a brigade to conquer the Rohillas as an act of revenge for their breach of faith. Hastings assented with reluctance, apparently believing that the



NAWAB SHUJA-UD-DAULA

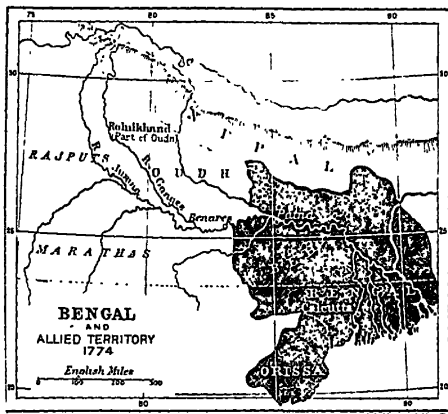
occasion would not arise. But in 1774 Shuja-ud-daula categorically demanded the fulfilment of the British promise. Accordingly, British troops were despatched to his assistance; the Rohillas were defeated; and their country incorporated in the dominions of Shuja-ud-daula. It is unquestionable that a highly

immoral situation was created when British troops were employed as mercenaries against people with whom the Company had no quarrel; but the culpability of Hastings has been ridiculously exaggerated in the high-flown rhetoric of Burke and Macaulay, who did not make allowance for the importance to Bengal of cordial relations with Oudh at a time when the Marathas were supreme in Delhi. The Rohillas had little better title to govern Rohilkhand than Shuja-ud-daula himself; and it is as foolish to represent them as a simple pastoral people who were patterns of antique virtue, as to ascribe to Hafiz Rahmat Khan the poetical genius of the great lyricist Hafiz of Persia.

While the fate of Rohilkhand was being settled, a drastic change was introduced into the Indian administration as a result of the Regulating Act. Before proceeding to notice the effect produced by this measure upon the situation in Bengal, we may profitably quote the words of a recent historian as summing up the achievements of Warren Hastings during the period when he was still free to act broadly as he thought best.

## Emergence of Order : Domestic Reforms 77

' He found the English in Bengal a source of disaster  
 ' and misery to the country, apparently incapa-  
 Achievements of Hastings. ' ble of cure ; he turned them into a spring of  
 ' new life which brought integrity and vigour  
 ' into its government, humanity into its law  
 ' courts, freedom into its markets. He found that the



*Longmans, Green & Co London, New York, Bombay & Calcutta*

' natives themselves, quite apart from the intrusion of  
 ' the English, hopelessly divided. Had there been no  
 ' Plassey, Bengal must still have been a prey to anarchy ;  
 ' rival princes disputed the throne ; marauders drained  
 ' the most fertile provinces ; official corruption and greed  
 ' exploited instead of protecting the peasantry. All this  
 ' was transformed by Hastings ; a firm authority was set  
 ' up ; enemies were shut out, and, above all, the long-  
 ' suffering ryot, whose cause Hastings had most at heart,  
 ' learnt that he could work his land unhindered and enjoy  
 ' a fair share of its fruits ; and that poor as well as the  
 ' rich could get hearing and receive justice. It is this



'determination to protect the down-trodden cultivator  
'more than any other single thing that stamps Hastings  
'as a statesman. It served him as a clue through the  
'labyrinth of Bengal's disorders; holding this fast he  
'was able to do more than save the English power in  
'Bengal—he saved Bengal itself.'<sup>1</sup>

The judges of the Supreme Court and the new  
colleagues of the Governor-General arrived in Calcutta

towards the end of 1774; and the fresh regime  
**The New** was inaugurated on October 20. On a pre-  
**Regime.** vious page we have already noticed some of

the defects of the constitution set up by the Regulating  
Act; and these defects were now to lead to a six  
years' struggle which thwarted the best efforts of  
Warren Hastings to discharge the responsibilities which  
he always keenly felt towards the people over whom he  
ruled. Three of the new Councillors, Clavering,  
Monson, and, above all, the venomous Francis, shortly  
quarrelled with the Governor-General, whose place they  
one and all coveted. They proceeded to make an  
acrimonious attack upon Hastings' administration. The  
triumvirate who constituted the majority in the Council  
made common cause; leaving Hastings and his other  
colleague Barwell, an experienced official, in a perpetual  
minority. For nearly two years Hastings

**Hastings** found himself reduced almost to impotence;  
**Impotent.** and any man of less determination to dis-  
charge a great work clearly envisaged, must have been  
hunted out of office. The majority of the new Council-  
lors emphatically condemned the Rohilla war. Here  
they seem to have been quite right. Yet, as has been  
well said, their greatest anxiety was to pocket the forty  
lakhs which the Nawab had promised to the Company.  
In their treatment of the ruler of Oudh they showed  
themselves most unscrupulous. Shuja-ud-daula died in

<sup>1</sup> Monckton Jones, *Warren Hastings in Bengal*, pp. 319-20.

1775; and the majority in the Council forced upon his successor a new treaty, increasing the subsidies due to the Company, and securing the cession of the district of Benares. Hastings fought gallantly for the Nawab-Wazir, urging that the course proposed was both unjust and impolitic. But he was helpless.

The spectacle of his humiliation was directly responsible for another of the hotly discussed incidents in his career. Charges of corruption were brought against him in 1775 by Nand Kumar. The majority in the Council, without subjecting these charges to critical examination, proceeded to arraign Hastings before themselves. Unfortunately for his own good name, Hastings was so incensed by the insulting attitude of his colleagues that he refused to meet his accuser. Had he done so, the main ground of suspicion would certainly have collapsed; for in 1776, when the Law Officers of the Company came to investigate the charges made by Nand Kumar, they declared that these charges, even on the *ex parte* case before them, could not possibly be true. But the majority of the Council, having, as they conceived, an excellent weapon in their hands, resolved that the Governor-General should pay the sum he was alleged to have received into the Company's Treasury. A few days later Hastings and Barlow charged Nand Kumar and certain others with conspiracy. In July, 1775, the trial took place. Nand Kumar was acquitted of conspiring against Hastings but convicted of conspiracy against Barwell. But the finding was of little importance, for in the meanwhile, Nand Kumar had been arrested early in May on a charge of forgery put forward by one party in a civil suit. It should be noticed that the civil suit was an old one; and that the complainant had made up his mind to prosecute as soon as access could be had to the forged document. In fact, the charge of forgery cannot be connected in any way with

The Nand  
Kumar  
Case.

Warren Hastings. And despite the mud-flinging of Macaulay, it is impossible to find any support for the theory that Hastings and Impey entered into a conspiracy to remove an inconvenient individual. The trial lasted from June 9 to 16 before all four judges of the Supreme Court. The jury brought in a unanimous verdict of guilty. It must, however, be pronounced a grave miscarriage of justice that the death penalty was inflicted upon Nand Kumar. Complicated legal questions arise as to whether the Supreme Court had jurisdiction over Indians; and in any case there can be little doubt that the English law making forgery a capital offence could not fairly be applied to India. We may notice that the majority of the Council made no move to secure Nand Kumar's reprieve, although they must have known that his execution would have interfered with the investigation of the charges which he was putting forward against the Governor-General. The only rational explanation of such conduct seems to be that they were by this time convinced of the unreliability of Nand Kumar's character and the falsity of the accusations which they had at one time so eagerly believed.

It will be convenient at this stage briefly to recount the history of the opposition which Warren Hastings encountered from another quarter. His troubles in the Council came to an end by the death of Colonel Monson in September, 1776. About a year later General Clavering also died; and in August, 1780, the Governor-General fought a duel with Francis, the result of which was temporarily to disable his most formidable opponent. But even before Hastings had become supreme in the executive government, he was called upon to face serious antagonism from the Supreme Court. Owing to the failure of the Regulating Act to define the relations between the Court and the executive, and to lay down

The  
Supreme  
Court.

## Emergence of Order : Domestic Reforms 81

any clear directions as to the bounds of the Court's authority, the judges displayed an increasing disposition to trench upon the power of the Governor-General and Council. The Court interfered with the ordinary course of administration; and in particular threatened at one time to paralyze the operation of the Diwani Courts. It claimed power over people far away from Calcutta. Deadlocks soon arose, until at length the executive ordered their officers to ignore the jurisdiction of the judges; while the judges declared the Governor-General and the Councillors guilty of contempt of Court. A temporary solution was found in 1780 by which Sir Elijah Impey, the Chief Justice in the Supreme Court, was also made President of the Company's Court of Appeal for Diwani cases. Impey's acceptance of this post has been responsible for much of the belief that he was over-subservient to the Governor-General: but no good grounds have ever been shown for such supposition. He had, however, made himself very unpopular in India, and in 1782 he was recalled.

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## CHAPTER IX

### The Foreign Policy of Warren Hastings

WE have already noticed the remarkable achievements of Warren Hastings in the matter of domestic reform. We must now turn to his foreign policy. In this sphere, as we shall notice, he was far less successful. His mistakes, and indeed his faults, lay him open to serious accusation.

Under the Regulating Act the Bengal Government was given certain powers over the Governments of Bombay and Madras. These powers were not, however, very comprehensive or very well defined. Unfortunately, at this period, both the subordinate presidencies were in the hands of incapable men; while Madras in particular was passing through an era of corruption almost as serious as that from which Bengal was now

**Bombay  
and the  
Marathas.** emerging. It was from the Bombay side, however, that trouble first arose. Since its foundation, the Bombay Presidency had scarcely extended beyond the limits of Bombay Island and certain adjacent ports. But in 1775, the authorities sought to acquire Salsette and Bassein. They hoped to achieve this extension of territory by interfering in the domestic politics of the Marathas. The fourth Peshwa, Madho Rao, was succeeded, after his death in 1772, by Narayan Rao, who after a reign of few months was murdered by the partisans of his uncle Raghunath Rao. Civil war broke out between the adherents of the late Peshwa's posthumous son, and the party of Raghunath Rao. Raghunath Rao invoked the aid of the Bombay Government, buying their support by the cession of Bassein and Salsette. Hostilities then followed in which the British won some success. These events being reported in Bengal, Hastings showed a disposition to support the

Bombay authorities. He was over-ruled by the majority of his Council, who certainly seem to have been right on this occasion. The Directors, however, unexpectedly intervened on Hastings' side; the alliance with Raghunath Rao was renewed in 1778, and the Company was committed to a costly war with the Maratha confederacy. Early in 1779 an expedition from Bombay, badly led, was forced to conclude an armistice at Wargaon, by which all territorial possessions obtained by Bombay since 1773 were to be surrendered. This disaster was redressed by the energy of Hastings, who had now recovered power

in the Council. A Bengal force, led by  
**Hostilities.**

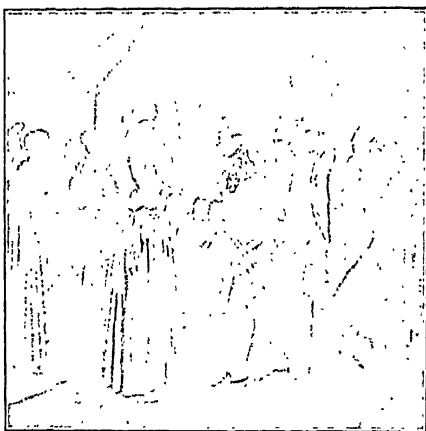
Goddard, made a brilliant march right across India, capturing Ahmedabad and Bassein. Shortly afterwards, the fortress at Gwalior, generally deemed impregnable, was gallantly stormed by Major Popham. The Gaekwad of Baroda entered into an alliance with the British at this time, which continued unbroken throughout all subsequent troubles. The British were soon, however, menaced by a very serious danger. The Nizam has been offended by the support given to Raghunath Rao; and while still hesitating as to what course he should adopt, was enraged by the action of the Madras Government, in annexing Guntur. He thereupon built up a powerful confederacy in conjunction with

Mysore and all the Maratha Chieftains except

the Gaekwad. Fortunately, the coalition was  
**Danger from Hyderabad and Mysore.** never really operative. Hastings conciliated the Nizam by giving up Guntur, and the

Maratha Chiefs showed little disposition to embark upon serious hostilities. But the danger from Mysore was real. The Madras authorities had warned Hastings that Haidar Ali was only awaiting an excuse to launch his troops against them: but the Governor-General took no precautionary measures. As might have been foreseen, Haidar Ali invaded the Carnatic in July 1780, and defeated an English force

under Colonel Baillie. In October of the same year he captured Arcot. The Madras Government was unable to resist him successfully, and the whole country lay at his mercy. To add to Hastings' difficulties, the French, who had been at war with Great Britain since 1778, were known to have despatched a powerful expedition to India. England herself was now at bay, facing a coalition of France, Spain, Holland and her own revolted American colonies. At this crisis Hastings



ADMIRAL DE SUFFREN'S INTERVIEW WITH HAIDAR ALI

displayed a wonderful mixture of skill and determination. He assured himself of Maratha neutrality by concluding a separate peace with the Raja of Berar and with Scindia, who in his turn agreed to negotiate between the British and the Maratha confederacy. This eventually resulted in the treaty of Salbai, which in 1782 gave the English Salsette. This treaty is important not merely because it

## The Foreign Policy of Warren Hastings 85

finally detached the Marathas from Haidar Ali, but also

**Hastings  
makes  
peace  
with the  
Marathas.**

because it secured twenty years of peace between the confederacy and the English. Hastings can fairly be criticized, first for needlessly provoking hostilities with the Marathas ; and secondly for failing to make adequate provision

against Haidar Ali's designs. But it must be admitted that when the crisis arose, he encountered it with consummate courage and address. While labouring to conciliate the Marathas, he spared no pains to restore the position in Madras. Sir Eyre Coote was despatched from Bengal, and Haidar Ali was defeated with terrible loss at Porto Novo in 1781. Other victories followed. But by this time the French expedition had arrived, and a powerful fleet temporarily disputed command of the sea with the British. The English Admiral, Hughes, though

**Dangers  
from the  
French.**

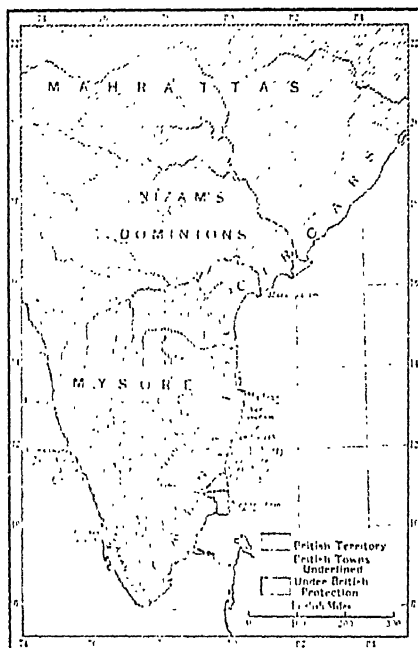
inferior in resources to the great French seaman, de Suffren, succeeded in keeping his fleet in being, and in preventing the French from exploiting the difficulties of the English.

During the year 1782-3, five severe engagements were fought between the English and the French fleets. But de Suffren, owing to the absence of a suitable base on land, was unable to utilize his momentary naval preponderance in Indian waters. He did succeed in landing a force to assist the Mysore Sultan ; but when in 1782, the year of Rodney's great naval victory in the West Indies, the control of the seas once more fell indisputably into the hands of the British, his task became hopeless. After the treaty of Versailles in 1783, Mysore was left unaided. Haidar Ali had died at the end of 1782 and was succeeded by his son, Tipu. The new ruler of Mysore showed himself fully capable of resisting his antagonists ; but his resources were much exhausted by

**Struggle  
with  
Mysore.**

the long struggle. Had the Madras authorities pushed the advantage of their position, they might have dictated terms of peace, but they





MAP ILLUSTRATING MYSORE WARS

so managed the affair that the Sultan was able to manœuvre them into the position of suppliants. The treaty of Mangalore, signed in 1784, merely confirmed each party in its possessions and provided for the restoration of prisoners—a provision which Tipu for his part did not carry out. With the end of the fighting in the Carnatic, generally known as the Second Mysore War, the security of the British in India remained uncontested.

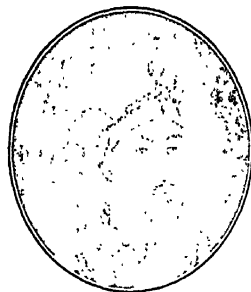
We have seen that Warren Hastings was successful in preserving British influence in India from a series of serious dangers. Unfortunately, the difficulties to which he was exposed in the years following 1778 led him into a number of actions which must be severely reprobated. Struggling against a host of enemies, he was frequently at his wit's end for money, and compelled to adopt questionable expedients for obtaining it. The outbreak of war with France in 1778 led him to demand a special war contribution of five lakhs of rupees from Raja Chait Singh of Benares. Equal sums were exacted in each of the two successive years. The Raja claimed that his agreement with the Company exempted him from all contribution beyond his regular tribute of 22½ lakhs; but Warren Hastings remained obdurate. In 1780, the Raja offered the Governor-General a present of two lakhs; which Hastings accepted and devoted to the pressing needs of the Company; but he would make no reduction in the special contribution. The Raja's endeavours to evade what he regarded as an unjust obligation excited the wrath of Hastings, who went himself to Benares and endeavoured to carry matters with a high hand. A rising took place which forced the Governor-General to take refuge in the fort of Chunar; while Chait Singh, fearing the consequences to himself, fled to Gwalior. His nephew was installed as Raja and compelled to pay a largely enhanced tribute. There can be little doubt that Hastings

Censurable actions of Hastings.

Chait Singh.

behaved with 'impolitic severity and precipitation'; and all arguments as to whether he was theoretically justified or unjustified in demanding from the Raja a special war contribution are of little significance in comparison with his impetuous mismanagement of the whole affair.

The second indefensible incident, also to be ascribed to the financial difficulties of the Governor-General, was the case of the Begams of Oudh. Asaf-ud-daula, the Nawab-Wazir, had fallen into arrears in his subsidy for the payment of British troops. Further, being of an extravagant disposition, he needed money. His mother and grand-



NAWAB ASAF-UD-DAULA

mother having obtained large estates and a valuable treasure upon his father's death, Asaf-ud-daula desired to turn their resources to his own use. In 1775, the Nawab-Wazir's mother had paid him a large sum of money on condition that the Company guaranteed that he would make no further demands. But six years

later, his financial necessities were greater than ever. He met Hastings at Chunar, soon after the deposition of Raja Chait Singh, and concluded an arrangement for the adjustment of his debts. Hastings believed, rightly or wrongly, that the Begams had been concerned in Chait Singh's revolt. He thereupon cancelled the arrangement made in 1775 and authorized the British Resident at the Nawab-Wazir's Court to assist in putting - pressure to bear upon the old ladies. This was done,

## The Foreign Policy of Warren Hastings 89

and large sums of money were obtained. There is no reason to suppose that Hastings either knew or desired to know the exact measures employed; but the whole incident is thoroughly discreditable, and it is difficult to disagree with the verdict of Sir Alfred Lyall: 'The employment of personal severities, under the superintendence of British officers, in order to extract money from women and eunuchs, is an ignoble kind of undertaking; . . . To cancel the guarantee and leave the Nawab to deal with the recalcitrant princesses was justifiable; to push him on and actively assist in measures of coercion against women and eunuchs was conduct unworthy and indefensible.'

After spending some time in arranging the affairs of Benares and Oudh, Hastings returned to Calcutta in 1784. Here he received the news that Parliament had passed Pitt's India Act. Thoroughly disapproving of this measure, and conscious that he was not receiving the support of the Ministry at home, he determined to leave India. The Directors throughout trusted him and gave him their full confidence; but they were no longer in possession of the power they once had exercised, and he doubtless foresaw difficulties in the future. The great Governor-General left India in February, 1785.

For roughly seven years after the passing of the Regulating Act of 1773, Parliament had been able to give little time to India. The rebellion of the North American Colonies, and the war of revenge conducted by France, had turned the attention of statesmen and politicians alike to European and American affairs. But in 1781, when the Charter of the East India Company came up for renewal, the control of the State was still further extended. The Company's privileges were, it is true, renewed for another ten years; but the financial arrangements between the Company and Government were more

**Hastings  
retires.**

**Parliament and  
the Company.**

strictly regulated, and the hands of the Directors further tied in the conduct of business. Two Parliamentary Committees were appointed to enquire into Bengal affairs and the Carnatic war respectively; and in May, 1782, the House of Commons resolved that the Governor-General and the President of Bombay should be recalled. The Court of Directors ignored this resolution, as they were legally entitled to do. Parliament, however, did not meekly accept this challenge to its authority. In 1783 Fox brought forward his India Bills, the effect of which, had they been passed, would have been to transfer the valuable Indian patronage to the hands of the Government. The measures were thrown out by the House of Lords; King

George III forced a dissolution; and Pitt  
 Pitt's India Act. came into power for twenty years. One of his first measures was the India Act of 1784.

Six Commissioners, consisting of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, a Secretary of State, and four Privy Counsellors, were set up to deal with the civil and military affairs of India. This body was generally known as the Board of Control; and before long real power passed into the hands of the senior Commissioner, who became known as President. Orders passed by the Commissioners were to be transmitted to India through a secret Committee of the Directors; and the Court of Proprietors were deprived in large measure of their power to interfere in matters of policy. In India, Government was concentrated in the hands of a Governor-General and Council of three Members; while Madras and Bombay were definitely subordinated to Bengal in all important matters. A non-aggressive policy was clearly formulated, it being declared that 'to pursue schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India are measures repugnant to the wish, the honour and the policy of this nation.' Circumstances, as we shall shortly see, were to make this pious pronouncement entirely im-

## 11 The Foreign Policy of Warren Hastings 91

practicable: but in an endeavour to carry it into effect, the Governor-General and his Council were expressly prohibited from declaring a war or entering into warlike alliances, against any of the Indian States, without the consent of the Court of Directors. Other enactments were passed, about the same time, remedying certain of the defects which experience had discovered in the Regulating Act. The jurisdiction of the Supreme Court was defined; and the Governor-General was given power in case of emergency to over-rule his Council. But despite the increasing control exercised by the British Government over Indian affairs, the whole patronage of the Company remained in the hands of the Directors, who also retained theoretical power to recall the Governor-General.

Warren Hastings lived for thirty-three years after his retirement. When he returned to England, his **Hastings impeached.** many enemies combined to launch an attack upon his conduct in India. The spite of Philip Francis, a soured and discontented man, found an invaluable ally in the noble, though frequently misinformed, humanitarianism of the great orator Burke. In 1786, Burke moved in Parliament for papers dealing with various points of Hastings' administration; and in the debates which followed, the House condemned his dealings with Chait Singh and the Begams of Oudh; while acquitting him on the questions of the Maratha and Rohilla wars. An agitation was then started for his impeachment; and so strong was the *prima facie* case that Pitt, Prime Minister, and Dundas, President of the Board of Control, felt themselves bound to acquiesce in the procedure. The trial began in 1788. Warren Hastings was accused before the Lords by representatives of the Commons, the principal 'Managers' of the business being, Burke, Fox, and Sheridan. At first the accusers enjoyed a certain measure of popular support; but this they quickly lost owing to the indecent

violence of their language, which contrasted so strongly with the dignified bearing of the accused statesman. Burke, in particular, almost lost his mental equilibrium; and instead of confining his accusation to those incidents in Warren Hastings' career which might fairly be pronounced culpable, destroyed all chances of success by irritable abuse and wholly unwarranted imputations against the personal integrity of his adversary. The procedure dragged on until 1795 when Hastings was acquitted upon all the charges.

Probably no statesman in the world has had his public conduct so completely explored and laid open to view as Warren Hastings. To those of us, who prefer to examine the circumstances of the impeachment rather from the original documents than through the brilliant distorting-glass of Macaulay's imagination, it is obvious that the proceedings evoked most remarkable evidence of the administrative ability, the courage, and the equanimity of the great Governor. His mistakes and his rare acts of injustice, when they are brought to light, do but serve to emphasize the more noble traits which in eminent degree characterized the major portion of his career. But the impeachment, while it inflicted upon Hastings a degree of suffering which every impartial critic must now recognize to have been in a large measure undeserved, did at least perform one public service of the highest importance. It brought home both to the statesmen and to the people of England the defects of the system which Hastings was called upon to administer; and it cleared the ground for those salutary reforms in the government of the Company's possessions in India which were to lay the foundations for a new and happier era.

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## CHAPTER X

### The New Era

WHEN Hastings left India, he handed over charge to Sir John Macpherson, the senior Member of Council. The previous career of the new Governor-General had been disreputable; and during his eighteen months of office he indulged in what Lord Cornwallis afterwards described as 'a system of the dirtiest jobbing.' He effected some financial economies; but his administration of foreign policy was unsuccessful. The great Mahadaji Scindia was allowed to obtain the government of the provinces of Agra and Delhi with complete control over the titular Emperor.

The authorities in England determined at this time to embark upon a sensible innovation. They felt that the responsibilities henceforth to be discharged by a Governor-General necessitated the appointment of a man from English public life. After some abortive negotiations with Lord Macartney, at this time Governor of Madras, they appointed Lord Cornwallis Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief in 1786. The new Viceroy, despite his disastrous surrender to General Washington at Yorktown in the American War of Independence, was popular and thoroughly trusted. The power which was given him to override the majority of his Council constitutes the best proof of the estimation in which he was held by all parties. He was in every way well fitted to undertake the reform of the Indian administration. Without personal ambition, he was animated by a strong sense of public duty. He abhorred

Sir John  
Macpher-  
son.

An  
Innova-  
tion:  
Lord  
Corn-  
wallis.

corruption of any kind and his standard of honour in financial matters was beyond reproach. He set his face like a rock against jobbery: and had the courage to refuse everyone, from the Prince of Wales downwards, who approached him in this connection.

So far as Indian affairs are concerned, the importance of the Governor-Generalship of Cornwallis resides almost entirely in the domestic reforms which he initiated. Relations with the Indian Princes interested him but little; he directed his attention rather to the reform of the Services; to the settlement of the land revenues; and to the re-organization of the law courts. We may proceed to deal with his achievements in each of these directions in the briefest possible manner.

We have seen that the principal difficulty with which Clive and Hastings were confronted in their endeavours to introduce purity of administration was the temptations which beset the Company's servants in India. The Directors refused to pay their employees an adequate salary; preferring to give them an annual sum which was little more than a retaining fee, supplemented by large commissions on the business they transacted. Further, since no pensions were allowed, it was inevitable that the Company's servants should devote a large share of their energies to the acquisition of a fortune which would enable them to retire in comfort. Thanks to the energetic advocacy of Cornwallis, the Directors were now compelled to revise the whole system. The Governor-General sternly repressed the handling of commissions, securing to the Company's servants adequate salaries with which, he insisted, they should be content. He further introduced a separation—afterwards largely modified—between their executive and judicial powers. So thorough were his reforms that we can trace from his time the rise of that recognized and

Internal  
Reforms.

Pure  
Adminis-  
tration.

unquestioned integrity which has for long been the pride of the covenanted services in India.

Equally important, from the point of view of future developments, were the changes which Lord Cornwallis introduced into the land revenue system. It must be realized that when the Company acquired the Diwani of Bengal, they found a system in vogue which was a natural development of the Mughal plan. The cultivators paid a fixed share of the produce of their land to zamindars, who in their turn contracted with the Government for a specified amount. In the course of the first half of the eighteenth century, the office of zamindar became hereditary. Hence, although in theory the zamindar still remained a mere contractor, he henceforth acquired a definite transferable right to a portion of the land revenue. In addition to settling the incidence of taxation in his area, he was also within certain limits, responsible for law and order. Great confusion, however, existed; the payment of dues to Government was often in arrears: and the local administration of the zamindars displayed grave defects. Hastings, as we noticed, with the object of stabilizing the situation, and securing the payment of Government dues, began to lease zamindari rights to the highest bidders for a period of five years. Unfortunately, unrestricted competition led among other evils to the promises of larger sums than the zamindars could pay. Arrears once more mounted up, and the old families were in many cases displaced by new men. As though to make matters even worse, a system of annual leases was then tried. The blunder was soon rectified; for the flow of capital was checked on account of the precarious nature of the zamindar's tenure; and the revenue suffered. Lord Cornwallis, after devoting much care to an examination of the facts before him, determined to afford the zamindars as much security as possible. In 1793,

**Land  
Revenue  
Reform.**

**The Per-  
manent  
Settle-  
ment.**

therefore he recommended that the government dues should be fixed in perpetuity. It is often said that Cornwallis made the mistake of confusing the Bengal zamindar with the English landlord. The statement is perhaps correct if applied to the House of Commons and the Home Government ; but the Company's servants in India were far too closely in touch with facts to fall into an error so elementary. The British authorities were animated by two principal motives in making this change. In the first place, they were anxious to secure some kind of stability in the land revenue system ; and in the second place, they were anxious to give the zamindars a stake in the prosperity of the area which they controlled. Lord Cornwallis made no mystery of his intentions. He desired to create a landholding class attached by their interests to the British, and enabled by the fixity of their tenure to secure the proper development of the land. But the disadvantages of the plan were great. In the first place, he sacrificed, to an extent which he did not realize, the rights of the cultivators ; who, instead of holding their land by traditional right, became from this time forward the mere tenants of the zamindars. Further, the State deprived itself for ever of the right of profiting by any subsequent increase in land values ; and as a result the zamindars henceforth enjoyed the whole difference between the sums paid to them by their cultivators, and the sums which were due to the State. Accordingly, as has been said, 'the rest of India has to be taxed more heavily than Bengal ; landlords may enjoy the privilege of special emoluments.' Generally speaking the immediate results of the permanent settlement were good ; and the main criticism which can be brought against it is that it was introduced at a time when the value of the land was imperfectly known. Had it been brought into effect a few years later, the anomalies which are still apparent at the present time would never have been so marked.

But in fairness to Lord Cornwallis it should be remembered that his plan worked very well for three-quarters of a century, and substantially contributed to the wealth and prosperity of Bengal.

✓ The third great reform of Lord Cornwallis was in the organization of the judiciary. He set up in every district a civil court under a European judge; divested the Collectors of judicial functions; and established a proper gradation of Courts of Appeal. Perhaps even more striking was his reform of criminal jurisdiction. He finally abolished the Naib-Subadar's control over the *Nizamat* and erected an organization of criminal courts parallel to that of the civil courts. An elaborate code of regulations was drawn up to guide the new judges. The law administered by the criminal courts was still the Muhammadan Code, although it was slightly modified in certain directions. Its equitable working was, to some extent, ensured by the supervision of the Court of Criminal Appeal, the Sadar Nizamat Adalat, which stood on equal footing with the Sadar Diwani Adalat, the Supreme Court of Appeal for the civil organization.

These domestic reforms of Lord Cornwallis, which laid the foundations of the existing administrative system of British India, occupied the major portion of the Governor-General's attention. He was somewhat indifferent to the interests of foreign policy; his principal wish being to secure peace for his remedial measures. He refused to interfere in the politics of Northern India; and turned a deaf ear to the appeal of the Mughal Emperor, who was again exiled. But he was unable to avoid hostilities with Mysore. His course of action was much complicated by the ill-advised treaties into which the Madras Government had from time to time entered. The Nizam appealed to the British for help in recovering certain territories of which he had been deprived by the Sultans.

Foreign  
Politics.

of Mysore ; but Lord Cornwallis discovered to his embarrassment that the claim of Mysore to these territories had been recognized by treaty. After some hesitation, Cornwallis decided to support the Nizam, for he saw that Tipu Sultan was meditating hostilities. He accordingly placed British troops at the Nizam's disposal ; and very disingenuously omitted Tipu Sultan's name from the list of British allies against whom these troops were not to be employed. At the end of 1789, Mysore attacked the Company's ally Travancore ; and the Governor-General thereupon formed a combination with the Peshwa and with the Nizam against Tipu. Fighting continued from 1790 to 1792, in which year the outworks of Seringapatam were captured, and Tipu Sultan was obliged to make his submission to the Governor-General. A large indemnity was paid ; and the Sultan was compelled to cede half his dominions. The Company obtained Malabar and some less important territories which enabled them not only to cut off Mysore from the sea on the west ; but also to command the defiles giving access to the Mysore plateau. Both the Marathas and the Nizam obtained accessions of territory and a share in the indemnity. Had the Governor-General so desired, he could unquestionably have conquered the whole of Mysore ; but he was not anxious to do so ; and he desired to conclude peace before the outbreak of hostilities with France—which he saw to be imminent.

In 1793, Cornwallis left India. He had performed a great work in the foundation of the administrative system, but his neglect of foreign policy was to expose his successors to grave difficulty. Tipu Sultan, who had been crippled but not destroyed, was attempting to intrigue with the French, with Afghanistan and with other Indian States. In Northern India a duel was being fought between Scindia

**Hostilities  
with  
Mysore.**

**Work of  
Corn-  
wallis.**

and Holkar for the control of Hindustan. Nevertheless, on the whole it is true to say that the Governor-Generalship of Lord Cornwallis gave the British a much-needed breathing space. The introduction of a proper administrative system greatly increased their real power; while the policy of non-interference in foreign politics, though it sowed the seeds of future trouble, enabled the Company's finances to achieve stability. As a result of this latter fact, there was comparatively little opposition in England to the renewal of the Company's privileges in 1793 for another twenty-four years.

Lord Cornwallis was succeeded by Sir John Shore, who continued the policy of non-interference.

**Sir John Shore.** He was a man of exemplary personal character; but he did not possess the initiative and the determination so necessary to an occupant of the great office of Governor-General. In particular, the studious neutrality which he preserved in foreign politics served to demonstrate the impossibility of the British dominion remaining stationary. In 1811, Sir John Malcolm wrote: 'It was proved from the events of this administration that no ground of political advantage could be abandoned without being instantly occupied by an enemy; and that to resign influence was not merely to resign power, but to allow that power to pass into hands hostile to the British Government.'

Shore refused to support the Nizam, despite treaty obligations, when Hyderabad was threatened by the Maratha confederacy. The Nizam was defeated at the battle of Kharda in 1795 and the Marathas became supreme in the Deccan. The Nizam thereupon dismissed the British battalions, and employed a French Officer named Raymond to recruit battalions of Frenchmen. Fortunately for the British, troubles shortly broke out in the Maratha confederacy. The young Peshwa Madhav Rao Narayan committed suicide; and the great Maratha statesman Nana Fadnavis found himself bitterly

opposed by the new Peshwa Baji Rao II. In consequence, the results of the Maratha victory at Kharda were largely sacrificed by the rival factions who competed for the Nizam's assistance. Troubles also arose in Oudh; but here Sir John Shore acted with greater vigour. He interposed in a succession dispute; and concluded a treaty by which the Company made themselves responsible for the defence of Oudh in return for an annual subsidy. The great fortress of Allahabad was handed over to the British.

Towards the end of his Governor-Generalship a serious mutiny broke out among the military officers, who resented the reduction of their perquisites resulting from the reforms of Lord Cornwallis. Sir John Shore displayed great weakness, and surrendered all that was asked in the way of allowances. The Directors thereupon recalled him; and after an attempt had been made to persuade Lord Cornwallis to resume the Governor-Generalship, the post was offered to Lord Mornington.

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## CHAPTER XI

### Some Great Indians of the Eighteenth Century

It is unfortunately impossible in a work of this character to describe in as much detail as is desirable the outstanding personalities of Indian politics. We have been rather concerned to trace the course of large movements particularly those whose influence has continued down to our own times. For this reason, we have devoted the principal portion of our space to recording the growth of the British Dominion in India. In order to supplement, to some extent, this neglect, we may now briefly study certain outstanding personalities who played their part upon the stage of Indian history during the latter half of the eighteenth century.

One of the most remarkable figures in the period with which we have been dealing is unquestionably the great Mahadaji Scindia.

The son of a Maratha of humble origin, who had by chance won the favour of the Peshwa, Mahadaji by his extraordinary abilities grew to be the most considerable of the Maratha Chiefs. The temporary ruin of the Maratha confederacy in the battle of Panipat—in which Mahadaji sustained a serious wound—cleared the way for the emergence of four powerful dynasties. After some trouble, Mahadaji obtained from the Peshwa the *jagirs* which his father had held, and, by degrees consolidating his power, became the most important figure in Maratha politics. He was not disposed, however, to take much part in the intrigues of the Poona Court; for he perceived in the weakness of the Mughal Empire and the confusion of the Peshwa's situation an opportunity to become the arbiter of Hindustan. In 1771, as we have already noticed, he

was successful in persuading Shah Alam to quit the protection of the British and to re-enter Delhi. Scindia thereupon became for a time the power behind the throne. He first came into conflict with the Company through their espousal of the cause of Raghunath Rao ; and the reverses he encountered—more particularly Popham's capture of Gwalior in 1780—opened his eyes to the strength of the British. From this time forward, he kept on good terms with them, and rendered valuable service to Warren Hastings in his peace negotiations with the Maratha Confederacy. Through his agency, the treaty of Salbai, which greatly enhanced his influence, was concluded. He was recognized as an independent ruler, and a British Resident was appointed to his Court. Impressed by the efficiency of the Company's troops, he determined to secure his power by an army disciplined upon the European model. He engaged foreign Generals in his service, and with their aid built up a force which was among the most formidable in India. Amongst the most famous of these Generals was Count de Boigne, who served his master well and faithfully and enabled Mahadaji to secure control over a large portion of Hindustan. Scindia's army consisted of three brigades of regular troops, equipped much in the same way as those of the Company, with the necessary complement of artillery and cavalry. With their help he was successful for many years in exercising a preponderating influence in the politics of Central India. In 1786 he again established the Emperor Shah Alam in Delhi, obtaining as his reward the grant of Vicegerent of the Empire for the Peshwa and for himself the dignity of the Peshwa's deputy. Owing to the hostility of the Rohillas, his control over Hindustan was precarious ; and in 1784 he received a temporary check from a coalition of Rajput powers ; but in 1788 he succeeded in occupying Delhi itself. He also conquered much of Rajputana ; and

reduced the hereditary enemy of his house, Indore, to a position of inferiority to himself. The culmination of Mahadaji's power came in 1792, when he went to Poona to take part in the solemn investiture of the Peshwa as Vicegerent of the Empire, he himself being the representative of the Maratha confederacy at Delhi. His power showed every sign of increasing ; and there can be little doubt that he would have absorbed Oudh, had not Lord Cornwallis addressed him a stern warning. He was too wise to seek hostilities with the British ; but had he lived longer, might well have inspired a formidable combination against them. As it was, he died in 1794, and his grand nephew Daulat Rao succeeded to his great dominions. Mahadaji Scindia, the real founder of the greatness of his historic line, takes rank among the ablest of Indian rulers during his age ; but like the majority of Maratha Chiefs, he established no formal administrative system. He regarded the larger portion of his territories rather as a source of tribute than as regions which claimed his good offices as ruler and protector. The sufferings which his subordinates inflicted upon Rajputana were, in particular, very great.

The second notable figure, whose career we may briefly describe, offers a remarkable contrast to the conquering might of the great Mahadaji. Ahalya Bai of Indore must be included among the most eminent of those women who have risen to fame in India. Born in 1735, Ahalya Bai married Malhar Rao Holkar ; but when she was thirty years of age, her husband died leaving her as the surviving representative of the dynasty. Remarkable to relate, she ruled Indore State for the next thirty years, with the loyal co-operation of the subordinate Chiefs. She was successful in maintaining peace within the boundaries of her dominions ; and she was able to secure herself from external aggression. She raised her capital Indore

Ahalya  
Bai.

from being a mere village into the position of a wealthy city; and she devoted much care to fostering its prosperity. She was herself responsible for the management of affairs; sitting in open Durbar without a veil to transact business. But with all her practical virtues, she did not cease to exemplify the noblest traits of Indian womanhood. The principal object of her life was to promote the prosperity of all around her. Her charity and her munificence both to men and animals knew no bounds; her favourite study was the Puranas which she could well read and understand. It is a little wonder that the success of her rule, in combination with the nobility of her character, won her the adoring respect of her people. Indeed, it is pleasing to encounter, amid the blood-stained welter of the late eighteenth century, a character such as that of Ahalya Bai, who ruled in peaceful prosperity over a contented people. Sir John Malcolm has paid a noble tribute to her. He says, 'It is, however, an extraordinary picture, a female without vanity, a bigot without intolerance. . . . Her name is sainted and she is styled an *Atatar* or incarnation of the Divinity. In the most sober view that can be taken of her character, she certainly appears, within her limited sphere, to have been one of the purest and most exemplary rulers that ever existed.' In the State which she did so much to raise to prosperity, her tradition is venerated and beloved to the present day.

Unfortunately for India, Ahalya Bai was a character unique in her age. The next portrait which we shall briefly sketch was far more typical of existing conditions.

**Haidar Ali.** It is that of the great conqueror Haidar Ali.

We have already found occasion to notice the military exploits of this Commander, whose talents and ferocity combined to make him a formidable enemy to the British. The facts of his early career are briefly to be stated. He was born in 1722, being the second son of a Mysore official. He remained completely illiterate,

spending the first years of his life in indolence. Circumstances, however, brought him into contact with the French; and perceiving the superiority of disciplined European troops, he formed a corps of sepoy trained in the French manner, with a considerable artillery - manned by European mercenaries. Winning the favour of the Chief Minister of the Raja of Mysore, he received an independent command, becoming at length General of the Mysore army. By 1761, he was the ruler of Mysore in everything but name. Two years later, after a temporary reverse of fortune, he conquered Kunara and obtained possession of the treasures of Bednore. An incident is told of his conduct at this time which throws considerable light on his character. A Brahmin named Khanderao, whom he had befriended, joined a combination of his patron's enemies. When the alliance was defeated, the friends of Khanderao, including the Raja and the Palace ladies, prayed Haidar to have mercy upon him. Haidar replied that as Khanderao was an old servant, he would not only spare - his life but cherish him 'like a parroquet'. With grim irony he confined the unfortunate man in a gigantic bird-cage in the open market-place; and allotted to him rice and milk as though in fact he had been the inmate of an - aviary. Khanderao survived for a year in this miserable condition, an object of pity and terror to all who beheld him. We need not here repeat the particulars already recounted in previous chapters regarding Haidar Ali's - wars with the British. We have noticed the vacillating policy of the Madras Government, from which Haidar profited to the full. He never forgave the failure of the English to come to his assistance when he claimed their aid in 1772; and eight years later, he had his revenge in the destruction of Baillie's forces. But when Warren Hastings began seriously to devote the resources of Bengal to averting from Madras the danger with which Haidar threatened it, the Mysore leader proved no match

## Great Indians of the Eighteenth Century 107

for the generalship of Sir Eyre Coote. Before his sudden death in December, 1782, Haidar Ali knew that his aggressive schemes had been hopelessly defeated ; and he had already determined to concentrate upon the defence of Mysore. It is said that before he died, Haidar Ali remarked to his Chief Minister, ' I have committed a 'great error ; I have purchased a draught of spirits at 'the price of a lakh of pagodas ; I shall pay dearly for 'my arrogance ; between the English and me there were 'perhaps mutual grounds of dissatisfaction but not 'sufficient cause for war, and I might have made them 'my friends in spite of Muhammad Ali, the most 'treacherous of men. The defeat of many Braithwaites, 'and Baillies will not destroy them. I can ruin their 'resources by land, but I cannot dry up the sea, and I 'must be first weary of a war in which I can gain 'nothing by fighting.' These remarkable sentiments serve to display the native sagacity of the distinguished leader. He perceived too late that he could not contend with a nation which exercised control of the sea. Had he realized this fact in time, it is quite possible that the dynasty he founded would have survived until the present day : for exercising as he did a minute personal supervision over every department of the Government, he had founded a State of extraordinary strength. He ruled by sheer terror, frequently inflicting public floggings of the severest character upon his most eminent Ministers and even upon his own son. His mental alertness was remarkable. He could speak five different languages, and his memory was extraordinary. His intellectual equipment, combined with the fierce determination of his character, raised him much above the level of contemporary rulers in sheer mastery of mankind.

Of his son, Tipu, there is less which is worthy of record. Like Haidar, Tipu was the bitter enemy of the British ; but unlike the father, the son had not the wisdom to realize the

Tipu  
Sultan.

impossibility of successful aggression. He was a brave and skilful general, ever ready to take advantage of the mistakes of his opponents; and the incapacity of certain individual British officers such as Braithwaite, whose forces he had annihilated in 1782, confirmed him in his opinion that he was the greatest general of his age. Quite unnecessarily, he greatly inflamed British feeling against himself by his extraordinarily cruel treatment of the prisoners who fell into his hands. He had some claims to originality of mind; and seems to have desired to emulate Akbar. He invented a new calendar, a new coinage and new weights and measures. As Sir Thomas Munro remarked, 'A restless spirit of innovation and a wish to have everything originate from himself, was the predominant feature of his character.' He displayed great, if fitful, intolerance towards non-Muslim faiths; but was not so orthodox as to refrain from making gifts to Hindu temples and invoking Brahmin prayers in times of danger. His rule was harsh and cruel; and when he was killed, under circumstances which we shall shortly relate, fighting bravely against the British, he died unregretted by his subjects, who welcomed the return of the ancient dynasty his House had supplanted.

*For Reference—*

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## CHAPTER XII

### The Expansion of British Power

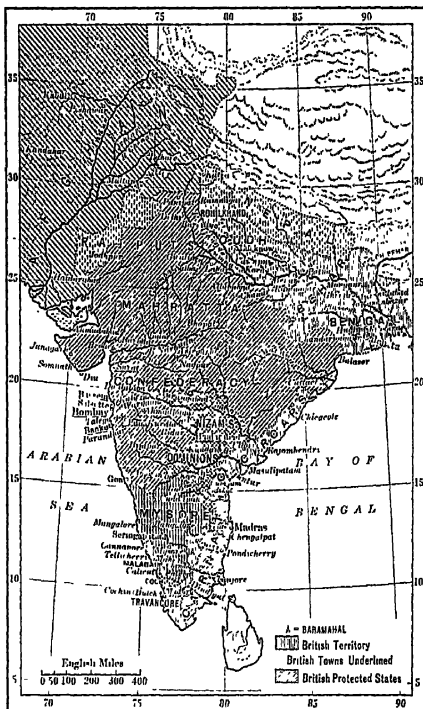
THE new Governor-General, Richard Wellesley, Earl of Mornington, was one of the greatest of British rulers in India. In view of the remarkable change which he effected in the position of the Company, it is interesting to notice that he came to the

Marquis  
Wellesley.



LORD WELLESLEY





INDIA AT THE TIME OF WELLESLEY

country animated by no design of embarking upon an aggressive policy. In a letter written some years later to Lord Amherst, Lord Mornington—by that time Marquis of Wellesley—remarked: ‘I did not arrive at the Cape

‘on my way to India imbued with the spirit of conquest, and an ambitious desire of extending our territorial possessions by violence

‘and war. I arrived in the full hope and expectation of finding and of preserving not merely peace in India but permanent security and with a general disposition to preserve tranquillity and good will among the native powers. . . . I never viewed a warlike policy in India as suitable to our condition or calculated either for our safety or our glory.’ But Wellesley’s hopes of peace were soon to be belied. England and France were now locked in the death grapple of the revolutionary wars; and Napoleon

was at the moment in Egypt cherishing designs for the conquest of the East. Wellesley quickly realized that the danger from France required British to become supreme in India.

He was strengthened in this belief by his discovery that Tipu Sultan, the Nizam and the Marathas were all intriguing in greater or less degree for French support. Tipu himself was actually in correspondence with Napoleon. From the British point of view, the danger of the situation was increased by the presence of large numbers of French mercenaries under the leadership of French Generals in the service of the Indian powers.

As soon as the Governor-General learnt that an alliance had been concluded between the French Republic and the Sultan of Mysore, he determined that the time had come to bind the Nizam to the British. This was accomplished by the plan known subsequently as a subsidiary alliance. That is to say, the ruler of Hyderabad agreed to a compact with the British Government which should subordinate to them his external policy and his foreign relations;

**His Anticipations.**

**A Dangerous Situation.**

**Bold Action.**

while they agreed to secure his dynasty upon the throne by placing at his disposal a contingent of troops for which he had to pay. At the same time, the Nizam consented to the disbandment of the French forces upon which he had previously relied. The Nizam was, therefore, reduced to dependence upon the Company, and the Governor-General was free to demand the submission of Tipu. The Sultan of Mysore returned an evasive and contemptuous reply to the letters forwarded to him. Lord Mornington delivered his blows with lightning speed. The campaign was concluded in two months. A Bombay force advanced from the west; while the main army under General Harris defeated Tipu in pitched battle and after a short interval, stormed Seringapatam on May 4, 1799. Tipu was killed fighting gallantly; and his State lay at the mercy of the British. Certain territories were allotted to the Nizam; yet others were taken over by the Company; but the remainder, sufficiently extensive to constitute the present large State of Mysore, was handed back to a Prince of the ancient Hindu dynasty which had been supplanted by Haidar Ali. The actual administration was entrusted to the able Brahmin Minister, Purnia, who filled the principal offices with local men and ruled successfully until 1811.

For the sake of continuity we may briefly allude to the subsequent history of Mysore. The young Raja behaved so ill, when he received his powers, that in 1831 Lord William Bentinck, then Viceroy, took the State under the direct administration of the Company. For the next fifty years Mysore was governed by British Residents, who were careful to act through the agency of local officials. But in 1881 Lord Ripon restored the royal family to power; and from that time onwards, Mysore has been a conspicuous example of a well-administered Indian State.

Freed from the menace of Tipu, the Governor-General steadily pursued his design of making the British the sovereign power in India. He shortly afterwards obtained control of Tanjore in return for a subsidy to the Raja. The Carnatic was also taken over; the Nawab being given a large subsidy and an honourable title. But the Governor-General shortly discovered that the plan by which Indian States were to entertain British troops for cash payments was unsatisfactory; since in the disordered condition of State finances the subsidies fell into arrears. He, therefore, persuaded his subsidiary allies to cede definite portions of territory as a provision for the forces maintained for their own security. It was in accordance with this plan that the Nizam handed over in 1800 the territory which he had gained after the Mysore wars; and that the Nawab of Oudh surrendered Rohilkhand and the Northern districts between the Ganges and the Jumna. That the Indian Princes who entered into subsidiary alliances with the Company reaped for the moment at least, advantages of a solid character in security and stability, cannot be denied. But modern sentiment, while it recognizes the aim underlying the policy of Lord Wellesley, does not endorse his methods. — There can be no doubt that he paid insufficient regard to the feelings of Indian Rulers; and showed very little patience or forbearance when he encountered resistance. He himself was entirely convinced, not merely that his policy made for the benefit of India by ensuring the ultimate pacification of the country; but that it was for the immediate advantage of the inhabitants of the territories now brought under the Company's control. For this view there is some justification. It is impossible to deny that the government of many Indian States at this period was evil and incompetent. But the effect upon the Princes themselves of the system of 'Subsidiary alliance' was disastrous. Relieved of all care for their own defence

Develop-  
ment of  
the  
Alliance  
Subsidiary.

and secured against internal revolution by the support of the British, they were for some time placed in a position which encouraged them to luxury, idleness and dissipation.

The change which had been brought about in the position of the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Nawab of Arcot shortly led to trouble between the Company and the Marathas. Maratha bands had long been accustomed to raid the Nizam's territories ; and they now found themselves cut off from a fertile field of plunder. There was, it is true, no particular reason for them to embark upon hostilities with the British. No English statesman, either in England or in India, desired to provoke the enmity of the formidable confederacy. But the Marathas and the British represented two distinct and diverse theories of government, which by their very nature could hardly co-exist in adjacent areas. The great Maratha Chiefs still continued to live upon a more or less predatory basis ; while the Company's main endeavour was to secure the substitute of order for anarchy throughout India. Wellesley realized that if peace were to be established, the Marathas must agree to live under a more settled form of Government.

At this time, the internal politics of the Maratha confederacy were in complete confusion. The death of the old statesman, Nana Fadnavis, removed the last force which could impose moderation on the ambition of individual

**Confusion  
of their  
Politics.**

Princes. Daulat Rao Scindia and Jaswant Rao Holkar contested for the control of the Peshwa, Baji Rao II. In 1802 Holkar's forces defeated Scindia and the Peshwa ; with the result that Baji Rao fled from Poona to Bassein and appealed for assistance to the British Government. Wellesley was induced to acquiesce in this petition for aid for two reasons : first because he feared that if the Peshwa failed to get help from the British, he would

intrigue with France ; and secondly because he believed that the Peshwa was still the predominant power in Maratha politics. An alliance with Baji Rao, so the Governor-General considered, would offer an excellent opportunity

of influencing the Marathas in the direction of peace and order. What he did not foresee was that this intervention by the British in Maratha politics was bound to terminate in a

conflict between two opposing systems of Government, in the course of which either the British conception of order or the Maratha conception of independence, must inevitably perish. This was not hidden from the home authorities, and Lord Castlereagh noted that the policy of entering into alliance with the Marathas could only be successful on the assumption that 'the genius of their government is industrious and pacific, instead of being predatory and warlike.' But the Governor-General thought there were good prospects of peace. On the last day of the year 1802, the treaty of Bassein was drawn up, by which the Peshwa agreed to enter into subsidiary alliance with the British. A detachment of the Company's troops was to be stationed at Poona ; Maratha foreign policy was to be under British control, and territory was to be ceded in order to meet the cost of protecting the Peshwa in his dominions. Baji Rao was restored to Poona with the help of the British : and Lord Wellesley's policy appeared to be crowned with success. But Scindia and the Raja of Berar definitely declined to accept the position, while the Maharaja Holkar held aloof. In the autumn of 1803 war broke out. The campaign was fought in three areas ; first in the Deccan, where Scindia's forces were menacing the

Nizam's frontier ; secondly in Scindia's own dominions ; and thirdly in Holkar's territory.

The Governor-General's brother, Arthur Wellesley, later to rise to eminence as the Duke of Wellington, was responsible for the Deccan campaign. He boldly

attacked the Maratha army, which was many times superior to his own forces in number, at Assaye. A complete victory resulted, and Scindia agreed to suspend hostilities in the Deccan. The forces of the Bhosla Raja were defeated two months later at Argaon in Berar; the great fortress of Gawalgarh was stormed in December; and two days later the Raja of Berar accepted a subsidiary alliance. The conduct of hostilities in Northern India was entrusted to General Lake. He captured Aligarh from Scindia's troops; and routed the pick of the Gwalior Army near Delhi. By this victory, the two keys of Hindustan, Delhi and Agra, passed into the hands of the Company; the old blind Emperor Shah Alam was set on his throne again in suitable dignity; and given an allowance. Soon afterwards Scindia's remaining forces were crushed at Laswari in Alwar State. The battle was fiercely contested; and although the army of Gwalior was defeated, it was far from being disgraced. The Maratha forces, particularly the artillery men, fought with extraordinary valour; and when at the end of the battle General Lake was cheered by his victorious troops, he took off his hat and thanked them, but, pointing to the Maratha gunners who were lying thick about their cannon 'told them to despise death as those brave fellows had done'. This victory ended the war with Scindia. At the end of 1803, the Maharaja accepted a subsidiary alliance of the usual kind and surrendered a considerable portion of his territory. It was now the turn of Holkar. He had stood aloof from the previous hostilities and the British hoped that it would be unnecessary to fight him. But he put forward extravagant demands, and deliberately plundered Jaipur. The Governor-General thereupon commenced operations against him. But the campaign was mismanaged. Colonel Monson, after advancing too far into Rajputana got into difficulties with flooded rivers, and was forced

into a disastrous retreat. Thereupon, the Maharaja Holkar attacked Delhi, but was unable to make any impression upon the British garrison. One of his armies was defeated at Dig; while he himself was routed by General Lake at Farrakhabad. But the glory of the campaign from the British point of view was marred by General Lake's failure to capture the strong fortress of Bharatpur, which he impetuously attacked without a proper siege-train. The Raja despite his successful resistance, was thoroughly alarmed and hastened to make peace; but there was no disguising the fact that British arms had received a serious check. This incident, however, exercised little effect upon the course of the war.

The results of the first general outbreak of hostilities between the Company and the Maratha powers were striking. The British gained a large increase of territory. The Doab had been annexed; and the British frontier now extended to the upper course of the Jamna. The eastern sea-coast between Bengal and Madras was under the Company's control; and they obtained valuable cessions in Bundelkhand and Guzerath. Scindia had been compelled to withdraw from the Deccan; and to abandon his claims over a large part of Rajputana. Both Scindia, Holkar and the Raja of Berar admitted British Residents to their Courts. Scindia went further; and early in 1804 entered into a defensive alliance with the Company.

Had Wellesley received the cordial support of the Directors and of the home authorities, there can be no doubt that he would have achieved his great object, which in his own words was, 'The prosperous establishment of a system of policy which promises to improve the general condition of the people of India and to unite the principal Native States in the bond of peace under the direction of the British power.' But the Directors looked with dislike



upon the manner in which the Governor-General took every opportunity of extending the Company's territory. His constant military operations were extremely expensive; and he was by temperament unfitted to remain on cordial terms with a body of business men. So long as his military policy was manifestly successful, he received the support of the Home Government even in the teeth of the Directors' protests. But the news of Colonel Monson's disaster, together with General Lake's failure at Bharatpur, united all parties in the demand that the Governor-General should be recalled. Accordingly, Lord Cornwallis, now in his sixty-seventh year, was sent out to succeed him. Wellesley left India in August, 1805.

In order fairly to estimate his achievements, it is necessary to remember that during the period of his Governor-Generalship world politics were dominated by the struggle between England and Napoleon. Quite apart from

His  
Achievements.

- Lord Wellesley's personal predilections in the direction of substituting good government for bad, he believed that the interests of his country emphatically demanded the supremacy of the Company in India. Unless this were achieved, he considered that France would have her opportunity to strike a deadly blow at Great Britain in Asia. This theory appears to have been the main-spring of all Wellesley's actions. And while we cannot from the modern standpoint, justify many episodes of his high-handed dealing with the Indian powers, we must not fail to recognize first, that he was actuated by no personal ambition; and secondly, that his policy resulted
- in the reclamation of a very large part of India from anarchy, tribulation and suffering.

Considering the circumstances attending Lord Wellesley's recall, it was only natural to expect that his successor would adopt a policy diametrically different. Lord Cornwallis was now old and feeble; and before he had been

Cornwallis's  
Second Term.

1807. As Sir Gilbert Elliot, he had been among the principal movers in the impeachment of Warren Hastings ; he was a firm believer in the policy of non-intervention ; and set his face sedulously against any extension of the Company territories. Yet, before he had been in India very long, he found himself compelled to abandon the negative attitude which characterized the foreign policy of Lord Cornwallis and Sir George Barlow. He was obliged to arbitrate between the Peshwa and some other Maratha powers ; and to suppress disturbances in Bundelkhand. In two other directions also circumstances forced him to act more vigorously than was at all compatible with the policy of non-intervention. The first of these occurred in connection with Berar, which was invaded in 1809 by a chieftain named Amir Khan at the head of irregular 'Pindari' bands. Lord Minto was under no obligation to defend the Raja of Berar ; but seeing the advantage of preserving order in a territory so close to the frontier of the Nizam he despatched a force to repulse Amir Khan. His prompt action preserved the peace of India ; for the great Maratha powers showed no disposition to interfere. But the most momentous departure of Lord Minto from the policy of non-intervention is represented by his dealings with the Sikhs.

For an account of the foundation of the Sikh religion by the Gurus, reference must be had to **The Sikhs.** works which deal with an earlier period of Indian history. We have already had occasion to notice from time to time the troubles caused to the Mughal Empire after the Sikhs had been transformed, by Muhammadan persecution, from a peaceful sect into a militant faction. As a result of the anarchy which followed the invasions of Nadir Shah and of Ahmad Shah Durrani, the Sikh confederacy strengthened its hold over the Punjab. The main opportunity for the Khalsa came when Ahmad Shah Durrani retired to

Afghanistan after crushing the Maratha confederacy at Panipat. But for some time the Sikhs remained a loosely organized theocracy, divided into twelve *mists* or leagnes. Hence, while they were strong in defence, they lacked the centralized internal unity which alone could have made them a great aggressive power. This

state of affairs was remedied by the great  
**Ranjit Singh.** Ranjit Singh; who in 1799 made Lahore his capital, and gradually extended his control over the *mists*. His authority rested upon his magnificent army, consisting of some 30,000 troops equipped and disciplined in the European manner. Under the guidance of able foreign officers, like Ventura and Avitabile, this force attained a high level of efficiency. Ranjit Singh ruled with a ruthless severity which left its mark for long upon folk-memory. The name of Avitabile, who governed Peshawar as his deputy, is still remembered, and until a few years ago the beam upon which this ferocious General hanged three prominent citizens every week to discipline, as Ranjit Singh put it, 'that nest of scorpions', was still pointed out.

For some time the Sutlej remained the eastern boundary of his strong centralized kingdom; but in 1806, certain of the Sikh chiefs occupying territory between the Satlej and the Jamna sought his protection. Their antagonists approached the British Resident at Delhi. It was plain that if Ranjit Singh were left to himself, he would shortly advance his authority to the banks of the Jamna. Moreover, he controlled the passes of the North-West Frontier; and his attitude might well be decisive in the event of danger from that quarter.

At this time France and Russia were known to be meditating a blow at India through Persia; and the British regarded the menace as serious. Lord Minto fully perceived the delicacy of the situation and determined to

**Influence of World Politics.**

enter into a treaty with the Sikh potentate. He despatched an able civilian, Metcalfe, to open negotiations. At first, the hands of the British were somewhat tied by danger from the French, and Ranjit Singh was astute enough to demand recognition of his control of the Satlej-Jamna tract as a price of his alliance. But when Napoleon, became involved in the Peninsula War and quarrelled with Russia the French threat to India vanished. The British took a firmer line. They claimed that all the Sikh principalities east of the Satlej had passed under British protection when Scindia was defeated; and although Ranjit Singh displayed considerable impatience at this claim, he was at last induced to accept it by the diplomacy of Metcalfe. In April, 1809, a treaty was concluded which guaranteed the Satlej as the eastern frontier of Ranjit Singh's territory.

**Results of the Amritsar Treaty.** The complete success of the treaty with Ranjit Singh, and the relief experienced for nearly thirty years from all anxiety in regard to the Punjab, have somewhat tended to conceal the magnitude of Lord Minto's diplomatic achievement. On a comprehensive review of the nineteenth century history, we must confess that the treaty of Amritsar is among the forces by which British policy was largely shaped. But the point which most interested contemporary opinion was the fact that the British frontier was advanced from the Jamna to the Satlej by a Governor-General whose declared policy it was to make no additions to the already existing territories of the Company. Nevertheless, the duel for world-power between England and France, which had been the real cause of the British negotiations with Ranjit Singh, was destined even under this most pacific of Governors-General, to force the Company along its inevitable path of extension. A great enlargement took place in the scope of foreign relations, which was

destined for the rest of the century to exercise a supreme, and at times lamentable, influence upon the history of British India. Lord Minto was induced, by fear of the projected Franco-Russian expedition, to despatch an envoy to Persia. Unfortunately, the home Government had taken a similar step; and the rival embassies quarrelled. Ultimately, however, the Shah of Persia agreed to dismiss the French Ambassador and to resist any force which attempted to pass through his dominions on its way to attack India. Another embassy was despatched to Kabul. Mountstuart Elphinstone, who was in charge, met the Amir Shah Shuja at Peshawar, and secured his promise to oppose any attempt at the invasion of India by French or Persian forces. Finally, a treaty was concluded with the Amirs of Sind along similar lines.

The widespread fabric of diplomacy was never tested in the Governor-Generalship of its projector; for, as we have seen, the French invasion came to nothing. But the relations of the Company with Persia, with Kabul, with the Punjab, and even with Sind, while initiated in this almost accidental manner, were destined to shape the whole course of nineteenth century history in India.

Lord Minto is entitled to remembrance primarily as the successful antagonist of French designs in Asia. The measures which we have observed were perhaps less important from the point of view of the immediate political situation than the naval expeditions which he initiated against the French Islands and the Dutch Colonies. The conquest of Java in 1811 was a brilliant feat; and although this territory was handed back to the Dutch in 1814, the expedition paved the way for the ultimate occupation and retention of the strategic point of Singapore.

The Governor-Generalship of Lord Minto must be pronounced successful. He had accomplished notable

things in the sphere of diplomacy, while he had scarcely drawn the sword against any Indian Power.

**Dangers of Minto's Policy.** At the same time, the seeds sown by the policy of non-intervention were already beginning to put forth a harvest full of omen for

his successors. The Maratha powers, together with the roving robber bands of Pindaris, were oppressing Central India and Rajputana, the Gurkhas of Nepal were raiding British districts; the Burmese were showing a truculent disposition upon the North-East Frontier. There was a general spirit of discontent on the part of weaker powers, such as the States of Rajputana, at the policy of the Company. We may notice in exemplification of this fact a passage quoted by Vincent Smith:— The Resident of Delhi reported; people do not scruple to assert that they have a right to the protection of the British Government. They say that the British Government now occupies the place of the great protecting power, and is the natural guardian of the peaceable and meek. but owing to its refusal to use its influence for their protection, the peaceful and weak states are continually exposed to oppressions and cruelties of robbers and plunderers, the most licentious and abandoned of mankind.' <sup>1</sup>

**Close of an Era.** The departure of Lord Minto in 1813 marks the termination of the attempts to impose a policy of non-interference upon the Company's servants. From the time of his successor, the British authorities began, with some hesitation, and reluctance, to acknowledge their responsibility for the peace and order of India as a whole. In another direction also the Governor-Generalship of Lord Minto must be said to mark the close of an era. The Company's charter was due to expire in 1814; and since 1808 parliamentary Committees had been at work to ascertain the justification for continuing either the

<sup>1</sup> V. Smith, p. 615.

commercial monopoly or the political rights of the Company. It was soon plain that the commercial privileges were doomed. The age of monopoly had passed; and there was a universal demand that the trade of India should be thrown open. Accordingly, while the Company was allowed to retain its exclusive rights in the China trade for another twenty years, it lost its monopoly of the trade with India. So far as the Company's political and territorial possessions were concerned, there was little desire to interfere. Most people considered that the Court of Directors could more safely be entrusted with the patronage of the Indian services than could the Governments of the day, controlled as they were by the party system. Further, the plan devised by Pitt's India Act gave the Home Government an effective share in the shaping of Indian policy, while at the same time leaving a considerable responsibility upon the shoulders of the Directors. Suggestions were indeed put forward even at this time that the Crown should take over the administration of the Company; that the military forces of the Company should be absorbed in the King's services; and that the Civil services should be recruited by open competition. But such a plan seemed premature to the bulk of contemporary opinion; and in 1813 the political rights of the Company were renewed for another twenty years.

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## CHAPTER XIII

### Problems of Indo-British Commerce

THE termination of the Company's trade monopoly in the year 1813 furnishes a convenient point at which we may pause in our general narrative to outline the history of commercial relations between India and Britain. These relations have, particularly of late, constituted the subject of acute controversy ; and for this reason we shall confine our remarks to well-ascertained or easily verifiable facts.

In the sixteenth century, when the all-sea route between India and Europe became commercially important, the extent of the sea-borne trade was strictly limited—a fact of great moment now that the land-routes had fallen into decay. The annual intercourse was carried on by small fleets of vessels, each of which was only a few hundred tons in burden. Hence we must be on our guard against over-enthusiastic estimates of the immense value of the Indo-European trade. Further, it is a common mistake to imagine that European traders were attracted to India by the wealth of the country. This is not so ; they came to seek certain commodities which, though highly prized in the West, were cheap in India ; the difference between the prices at which these articles could be purchased in India and could be sold in Europe sufficing to secure large fortunes for those who trafficked in them.

There are no grounds for maintaining that India was a wealthy country, as wealth is now understood, at the time when European travellers began to make their observations. These travellers were impressed by the luxuriance of her tropical vegetation and the fertility of her soil,

Why  
European  
Traders  
came.

India  
never  
Wealthy.



they were astounded by the magnificent courts of the Indian princes, and by the hordes of jewels and bullion which they mistook for surplus wealth, not realizing that India, had, unlike Europe, neither banking facilities nor systems of credit. But they also pointed out the miserable poverty of the great mass of the people, the epidemics which devastated them, the famines which reduced entire districts to deserts, the squandering of the resources of enormous provinces upon the splendours of a single court.

It is particularly interesting to notice that the articles which formed the staple of the trade between India and Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are identical with those which made up the bulk of the commercial intercourse between the East and the West in ancient times. The only manufactured goods which European traders could discover were cotton cloths, muslins, chintzes, silk cloth and thread. These were for the most part the products of luxury industries, which catered for the needs of the wealthy classes. There is no evidence to show that either the standards of manufacture or the quantities produced had varied in any remarkable degree between the beginning of the Christian era and the sixteenth century. The same remark is true of the raw products of the country such as pepper, indigo, saltpetre and precious stones. It was in search of these commodities that the ancient navigators made their way to the shores of India; and it was again in search of them that the East India Company's fleets traversed the perilous waters of the Indian Ocean.

Throughout the seventeenth century, the trade of the East India Company in the east was confined to dealings in a limited class of goods. Spices were sought principally from the Archipelago; raw silk mainly from Persia; saltpetre and indigo chiefly from India. A certain quantity of fine

**Staple  
Articles.**

**What the  
Company  
bought.**

cotton cloth, and some manufactured silk goods, were exported from India for England; but the bulk of the Company's purchases of these articles were made for the markets of the Further East and of Persia.

The conduct of the Eastern trade was a matter of some difficulty for the Company, since India offered but a poor market for the staple products of England. Accordingly, the commodities which were purchased in India by the Company for export were largely paid for in bullion; and English literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is full of complaints regarding the immense drain of gold and silver from Great Britain to the East. It is interesting to notice that the writers of the later Roman Empire made exactly the same complaints. The fact is that until the Industrial Revolution conferred upon England the power of producing cheap cotton goods in large quantities, there was practically no market in India for anything that the Company had to sell. The profits derived from the Indian trade, we repeat, arose from the cheapness with which commodities like spices, saltpetre and indigo could be purchased in India, combined with the high prices which they fetched in Europe.

We may now turn to the conditions governing the organization of India's internal trade. It has been remarked that under the Mughal Empire, a provincial rather than a national system of economy prevailed. The co-existence of a number of governing authorities, each of which possessed in some degree the power of independent taxation, presented a grave obstacle to the freedom of internal trade. From an examination of the correspondence of the servants of the East India Company during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it is clear that the large variety of dues levied in India upon commerce fell under three principal heads. First came the sea customs duties upon imports and exports; secondly the inland customs

How it  
paid.  
  
Indian  
Trade  
Organi-  
zation.

charged upon the transit of goods from place to place; thirdly a multiplicity of local taxes of various kinds levied both upon traders and manufacturers. It was always the object of the East India Company to obtain from the Mughal Emperors *farmans* exempting them

from the second and third categories of Duties.

duties, which were arbitrary in amount and injurious in incidence; and when friction occurred between the Company and the various local potentates of India, the cause almost invariably lay in the claim of these Princes to ignore or to override the Imperial *farmans* exempting the Company's servants from local dues. We may notice in passing that this exemption was as a whole not inequitable. The Company placed at the service of Indian traders facilities for overseas transport infinitely greater than anything previously available. An increasing stimulus was thus afforded to Indian trade, and considerable wealth poured into the country. We may illustrate these remarks with particular reference to Bengal. In the year 1674, the Company's 'investment,' which represented their purchases of Indian commodities for export to Europe, amounted to £85,000. By 1680, the figure had risen to £150,000, and next year it was £230,000. The principal purchases for export consisted of silk and taffeta of fine quality, and saltpetre. It was the attempt of Shaista Khan to impose a crippling burden upon this growing trade which led to the beginning of friction between the Company's factors in Bengal, who were supported by the Hindu trading classes, and the Muhammadan administration.

Through purchasing fabric goods for export, the Company gradually built up a regular organization. In various parts of the country, subordinate factories were founded, which had local branches for particular districts. In each local branch the Company employed *Gumastas*, through

The  
Company's  
Trade  
Machinery.

whom contracts for the supply of cloth were made with weavers and advances of money were arranged. Difficulties frequently arose on both sides; for the weavers often failed to discharge their contracts; and the Indian agents of the Company were prone to abuse their authority. The Company passed frequent regulations to prevent the ill-treatment of the weavers; but the necessity of guarding against fraud rendered it inevitable that their work should be supervised. Hence arose a considerable number of complaints, some well-founded and some ill-founded, which have received great prominence in the works of certain historians.

It was obviously to the advantage of the Company to foster the commerce and manufactures of India upon which its own prosperity depended. But in encouraging the importation into England of Indian textiles, the Company found itself in conflict with certain local interests. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, competition between the new East India Company and the old London Company flooded the English markets with Indian goods; and at the beginning of the eighteenth century Parliament passed certain legislation to safeguard English industries. The wearing of silks, and dyed or printed calicos and muslins, was forbidden within the United Kingdom. The effects as well as the scope of this legislation have been much misunderstood. In the first place these fabrics formed only one single branch of the various kinds of Indian cotton manufactures; and in the second place, the Acts did not forbid import, but merely prohibited wear. The Company's trade in these goods, so far from falling off, continually increased: for they were imported into England for purposes of re-export to the continent of Europe and elsewhere. The only result of this legislative action was that these particular goods were not worn in England. It being to the Company's

**English  
Protective  
Policy.**

**Its Result.**

interest to push their sales elsewhere, a thriving re-export trade was built up between England and the Continent. The net result was that the volume of even these specified classes of goods purchased by the Company in India for transmission to Europe increased and did not diminish: as a study of commercial records clearly shows. It is wholly incorrect to say that the Acts of 1700 and 1720 passed in the interests of English manufactures, killed Indian industry. It is further to be remarked that there was at the time no Manchester cotton industry at all; it was the English silk and woollen interests that Parliament sought to protect. But within the next century there occurred two series of events which did inflict much damage upon the cotton manufactures of India. The first was the recurrent hostilities between England and France, which from time to time closed the continental markets against Indian cotton goods re-exported from England; and the second was the rise of the Industrial Revolution. In regard to the first set of factors there is little to be said; but the second demands a word of notice.

It is sometimes absurdly stated that the new industrial developments which took place in England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were a consequence of the plundered wealth of India, which, it is said, poured into Great Britain after Plassey. Mr. Digby, in his interesting but tendentious book entitled *Prosperous British India*, has given currency to this error, which is contradicted by chronology alone. The great advance in English cotton manufactures during the eighteenth century did not take place until after 1780. Between 1764 and 1766, the export of English cotton goods averaged only £223,000; and in 1780, which is nearly a quarter of a century after the battle of Plassey, it amounted merely to £355,000. It was in the year 1785 that the great change came. The first steam spinning mill was then at work; and the export

**Fact and  
Fiction.**

## Problems of Indo-British Commerce 133

of English cotton goods at once rose to £855,000. From this time forward, the advance was prodigious. Between 1786 and 1790 the export averaged £1,200,000. Ten years later it had nearly quadrupled; and by 1809 it had risen to £18,400,000. In the House of Commons, in the report of 1793, it was said 'that every shop offers British muslins equal in appearance and of even more elegant patterns than Indian at one-fourth less in price.'

In fact, it was the application of power-spinning and

**Why the  
Indian  
Cotton  
Industry  
declined.**

power-weaving to the production of cotton goods, which displaced India from the pre-eminence which she had hitherto occupied. The Company, which has been accused of crushing Indian industries, found its position seriously threatened by this new development. It was, however, quite unable to off-set the enormous disparity between power and hand manufacture. It is, therefore, not surprising that no successful effort was made to protect the declining Indian industry. It should further be remembered that the Indian consumers profited enormously by the presence, upon the Indian market, of unprecedented quantities of cheap cotton goods. These goods could be sold in India at a price which was not merely far below the cost of production of the finer grades of Indian cotton manufactures, but which was also far cheaper than the cost even of the home-spun garments employed by the poorer classes. Those who would blame the British authorities for not taking steps to protect Indian cotton manufactures against the new and overwhelming advantages enjoyed by the power-driven British industry, are obliged to assume that contemporary statesmen regarded these problems from a purely modern standpoint.

When the cotton industry of India began to decline, the East India Company for long devoted its efforts to the fostering of the silk industry. The consumption of Indian silks had been prohibited

**Silk.**

in England early in the eighteenth century ; but throughout the whole of that period the Company imported a moderate quantity of Indian silk goods for purposes of re-export. Unfortunately, the Bengal silk, which was reeled by crude methods, could not compete in quality with the silk of Italy. The Company began to cast about for methods to improve both the quality and quantity of the Indian production. Italian and French experts were imported to instruct Indian workmen in new methods ; and the Company often purchased for export larger quantities than they could dispose of. Early in the nineteenth century, thanks to the arguments of the Company's representatives, the British Parliament granted a tariff preference of over twenty per cent to

Indian silk. Curiously enough, the Company's policy has been much misrepresented. The introduction of new and more efficient methods necessitated the collection of Indian workmen into factories. But, on the other hand, no compulsion was employed against workers who preferred to employ the traditional methods ; and such persons as did enter the factories received largely enhanced wages. The Company was merely anticipating the practice followed by many modern Governments of establishing under satisfactory conditions a model industry, the produce of which it purchased itself. The reluctance of a conservative class to modify time-honoured methods, and to take advantage of the instructions provided in the Company's factories, is the only truth underlying the fantastic rumours of barbarous cruelty to which enemies of the Company, like the infamous and discredited William Bolts, have given circulation. It seems to the present writer that the late Mr. R. C. Dutt, in his *India under Early British Rule* has entirely misapprehended the point at issue, when he accuses the Company of discouraging the silk manufactures of Bengal in order to promote the silk manufactures of England. The

**The Com-  
pany's  
Policy.**

very reverse was the case. English silk interests had no reason to be apprehensive of Indian competition after the legislation of the early eighteenth century. The Company's markets, as we have already seen, were largely continental; and it was to meet the demands of these markets, whose tastes were now governed by the highly finished fabrics of Italy and France, that the Company embarked upon its plan of raising the level of manufacturing processes in Bengal. The inaccuracy of Dutt's conclusion is shown by the fact that throughout the later portion of the eighteenth century, that is to say, during the time when the Company was engaged in encouraging the manufacture, on a limited scale, of good quality silk, there was no decline in the purchases of this commodity in India. Had the Company really endeavoured to use its political power to discourage the manufacturers of Bengal, it is highly unlikely that its purchases for the re-export market of the Continent would have continued on a uniformly high level.

It is apparent even from these brief remarks, that the whole subject of the early trade relations between India and Great Britain has been confused by the statements of contending controversialists. The fact that controversy should ever have arisen must be ascribed largely to the jealousy, displayed by Lancashire manufacturers towards the end of the nineteenth century, of the vigorous young cotton industry in India, which, by the use of modern methods of power-driven machinery, gradually re-established itself. This jealousy lamentably affected British policy, so that much justifiable heart-burning was caused to Indians. Being convinced that the interests of India were at this time sacrificed to the political influence of Manchester, Indian public men were prone to suspect that past history would reveal similar instances of unfair discrimination; and when historical records are approached with the desire of

Why  
Contro-  
versies  
have  
arisen.



- securing support for a preconceived theory, disaster usually occurs. But those who claim for India her just and proper rights, should be careful to avoid prejudicing an indefensible case by historical arguments which cannot stand examination. The Company, it is true, failed, as men of that age must have failed, to foster Indian industries in the manner that modern conceptions of nationalism now demand. Such Indian industries as existed—and they were very few—were not deliberately destroyed. To have created manufacturing interests on a large scale would have been impossible for a handful of British administrators, confronted as they were by the traditional organization of Indian society, which discourages individual enterprise, and attaches little importance to the pursuit of material wealth.

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## Book II.—BRITISH SUPREMACY IN INDIA

### CHAPTER I

#### The Triumph over Rivals

THE first Governor-General under the new system, by which the Company lost its monopoly of trade, but retained its political control 'as a temporary concession' was Lord Moira. He is better known by his later title of Marquis of Hastings. The new Governor-General was in his fifty-ninth year, and had displayed for the greater part of his life no particular distinction. He owed his nomination solely to his friendship with the Prince Regent. But despite his record, he proved himself worthy to be ranked among the greatest of India's rulers. He combined in his own hands the supreme military as well as the supreme civil control, displaying an unflagging energy which astonished his subordinates. His views were clear cut. He recognized that Indian affairs were in the last resort under the control of the British Parliament; and that the time had long passed when the Company could claim to be anything but a virtual department of the administrative machine. In the next place, he was convinced that the policy of non-intervention had proved a disastrous failure. In his most illuminating *Private Journals* he wrote: 'Our object ought to be to render the British Government paramount, in effect if not declaredly'; and this principle guided him throughout his administration. But at the same time he was determined to abstain both from

aggression and from interference. He recognized that the Residents at the Courts of certain Indian Princes had pursued an irritating policy of pin-pricks in petty matters; and this he was determined to stop. 'A 'rational jealousy of our power,' he wrote, 'was not 'likely to exite half the intrigues against us which must 'naturally be produced by the wanton provocations 'which we have been giving on trivial subjects to all the 'States around'. Finally, he was under no illusions as to the difficulties of the situation which confronted him. It would be idle, he believed, to expect peace to continue for much longer; a cursory glance at the attitude of the Indian powers revealed 'the elements of a war more general than we have hitherto encountered'.

A study of the map of India at this time goes far to elucidate the political situation. On the north, the territory under British control stretched in a belt from the mouth of the Ganges to the district of Hissar, north-west of Delhi. This belt was broadest towards the east, tapering gradually as it approached the west, and occasionally dwindling, as when it passed the great enclave of Oudh, to a mere connecting slip between the two sections. In the Deccan, the whole territory south of the River Kistna was, broadly speaking, subject to the British, with the exception of the important states of Mysore and Travancore. The Company's territories in India thus constituted two great blocks, one on the north and one on the south.

These were connected with each other only by a narrow coast strip extending along the western side of the Bay of Bengal. Completely isolated from the other British possessions stood the small territory surrounding Bombay. The great regions of Central India, of Rajputana, of the Northern Deccan and Guzarath, were outside British influence.

By 1813 it had become plain that the reluctance of the Company to assume the responsibilities entailed by their power had much to answer for. The condition of Central India was pitiable in the extreme : while Rajputana was groaning beneath the Loofs of Maratha freebooters. The constant disorders in territories over which the Company had no control seriously menaced the peace of the British dominions themselves. Mountstuart Elphinstone summed up the situation as follows :—

‘ We have long since abandoned the policy which might perhaps have averted the jealousy of other Indian States ; and we have stopped short in the midst of the only other line that was either safe or consistent—that of establishing our ascendancy over the whole of India. In consequence, we have still the odium without the energy of a conquering people and all the responsibility of an extensive Empire without its resources or military advantages. There would be some reason in remaining in this dangerous position if we were strengthened by peace ; but so far are we from that that our provinces and the dominions of our allies are much more exposed to invasion and plunder than they could be in the time of war.’ By thus pausing in the midst of their task, the British had abandoned the greater part of India to anarchy. The smaller powers were weakened but not superseded. They had been deprived of the means of protecting themselves, while the duty of arranging for their protection was ignored by the Company. On the other hand, the stronger powers were freed from all control. Interpreting the indifference of the British as a symptom of weakness, they had long considered it unnecessary to observe those prudential restraints which had hitherto modified their excesses and restrained their ambition. Daulat Rao Scindia was constantly urging the Peshwa to discard his obligations and to revive the Maratha confederacy. The Peshwa, who needed no

‘ Non-  
Interven-  
tion ’ and  
its Conse-  
quences.

prompting, was attempting to set in motion a general league against the British. The Nepalese were openly violating the frontiers and refusing satisfaction. Ranjit Singh from Lahore was watching with doubtful eye the inexplicable apathy of the power to which he had been persuaded to bind himself in close alliance.

The first fruits of the policy of non-intervention were soon gathered by Lord Moira in the shape of trouble with Nepal. The Gurkhas, a mixed Mongolian people, had gradually overthrown the ancient Rajput dynasties of Nepal valley and by the end of the eighteenth century had victoriously extended their dominions to the east and west. Their ambition was yet unstated; but on the north, they were restrained by the frontier of China; on the west by that of Ranjit Singh. Encouraged by the passive attitude of the British Government, they determined to claim the plains which lay at the foot of their hills. Their truculent aggression made war inevitable. Lord Moira, after vainly endeavouring to keep the peace, decided to attack the enemy at four distinct points. At first, the unfamiliar nature of the country, combined with the valour of the Gurkhas, led to a series of small disasters. Before long, however, the British officers learnt the folly of frontal attacks on strongly defended stockades; and with the alteration of their tactics, the issue was not long in doubt. By 1816 the struggle was over; and under the terms of the treaty of Sagauli, the Gurkhas surrendered most of the Terai, including the disputed tracts; agreed to withdraw their claims over Kumaon and certain other hill districts; and received a British Resident. The peace concluded with Nepal has never been broken; and almost immediately after the war Gurkha soldiers began to enter the Company's army. The British have never attempted to interfere in the internal affairs of their ally; with whom relations have been from that day close and cordial.

The  
Gurkha  
War.

Unfortunately for the peace of India, the initial reverses in the Nepalese war proved a fruitful source of disturbance. The Residents at the Courts of Maratha Princes reported that the Durbars were restless and uneasy. Everywhere the forces of disorder seemed ready to raise their head. Lord Moira, now Marquis of Hastings, occupied no enviable position ; for the Treasury was empty and the home authorities were unconvinced of the necessity of anticipating the formidable onslaught of conjoined adversaries that was now being prepared. But at this moment serious trouble broke out with the Pindaris, which not only freed the hands of the Governor-General, but also persuaded his superiors there was no practical alternative to the policy of assuming paramount power.

As we had occasion to notice, the Pindaris were irregular soldiery, owing a more or less nominal allegiance to the great Maratha Chiefs, who for their part occasionally took individual bands into their service. The shadow of the Maratha name thus rested over these free-booters, and for long it was believed that any attempt to suppress them would be resented by their patrons. They wandered about the country as the spirit moved them gathering, like flies upon carrion, where pillage and disorder seemed to promise a harvest of loot. They were utterly noxious, a curse to humanity that cried aloud for extirpation. The following description of their activities was written in 1809 :—

‘The Pindaris generally invade a country in batches of from four thousand to one thousand each. They advance to the frontier with such rapidity that the account of their depredations is generally the first intelligence of their approach. As soon as they pass the frontier, they disperse in small parties of from five hundred to two hundred men. They are not encumbered with baggage of any description. They carry off every-

‘ thing which is valuable and easy of conveyance ; what  
 ‘ they cannot carry, they wantonly destroy. The incur-  
 ‘ sions of these common enemies to peace and tranquillity  
 ‘ are as regular as the periodical return of the monsoon.  
 ‘ The blessings which a bounteous Providence showers  
 ‘ at stated periods upon the thirsty plains of the Deccan  
 ‘ are as regularly defeated by a host of plunderers, who  
 ‘ seem to wait with malicious pleasure till the crops are  
 ‘ ripe upon the ground in order that the unfortunate  
 ‘ husbandman may be robbed of the fruits of his  
 ‘ labour at the moment when he ought to reap them.  
 ‘ The extirpation of such a race of men will be not  
 ‘ only a measure of policy but service to humanity  
 ‘ itself.’

Encouraged by long immunity, the numbers of the  
 Pindaris increased to an alarming extent ; until  
 Their Depre- in 1814 they were reckoned to have 21,000  
 dations. horse, 15,000 foot and 18 guns. In 1816 they  
 overstepped all bounds by conducting a foray  
 for eleven days and a half in the Company’s territory of the  
 Northern Circars. They plundered 339 villages, and put  
 to torture between six and seven thousand people to induce  
 them to disclose concealed property. In a white heat of  
 indignation, the Governor-General wrote in his Journal  
 on April 15, 1816, ‘ I have this day read a letter from  
 ‘ the Guntur Sarcar on the Coast stating a very affecting  
 ‘ circumstance. A village was surrounded by the Pindaris.  
 ‘ The horrors perpetrated by these demons at other places  
 ‘ made the poor villagers, totally unarmed and incapable of  
 ‘ resistance, fly to the desperate resolution of burning  
 ‘ themselves with their wives and children. The houses  
 ‘ were all of wood and palm leaf mats so that most of  
 ‘ them being set fire to at once, the dreadful sacrifice was  
 ‘ immediately fulfilled. Some boys who had not the  
 ‘ courage to bear the flames escaped and explained the  
 ‘ circumstances. All the rest of the inhabitants perished ;  
 ‘ and I am strictly forbidden by the Court of Directors to

‘undertake the suppression of fiends who occasion this heart-rending scene lest I should provoke a war with the Marathas. Hundreds of women belonging to other villages have drowned themselves in the wells, not being able to survive the pollution they had suffered. All the young girls are carried off by the Pindaris, tied three or four like calves on a horse to be sold.’

This time the Pindaris had committed one outrage to many. Even the Council in Calcutta, which still adhered to the Barlow policy, was horrified and supported the Governor in his demand for permission to take strong action. The Directors were convinced by his arguments and decided to take the risk. ‘Your language to Scindia and Holkar’ they wrote, ‘will be guided by the view which you may take ; first of the degree to which either of them may be suspected of having assisted or countenanced the Pindaris in any measures hostile to us or to our allies ; and secondly of the necessity or advantage of the passage through his territories or of the occupation of a post in them for the success of your operations. An avowed co-operation with the Pindaris against us or our allies on the part of Scindia or Holkar, would, of course, place you in a state of direct hostility with the offending Chief.’

The Governor-General directed all his energies towards averting the possibility of a war with the confederated Maratha powers. He mobilized a great army of 120,000 men, divided into two parts, which were to converge upon Central India from the north and from the south respectively. With the certainty that an ample force would be available in case of necessity, he laboured to conciliate the Maratha princes. Daulat Rao Scindia agreed to stand aside while the British dealt with the Pindaris. Tulsi Bai, the lady Regent for the young Holkar, was persuaded to make common cause against the robber bands. Appa Sahib, Regent for the imbecile heir of Nagpur, accepted a -

**Action  
against  
them.**



subsidiary alliance as a price of permission to occupy the throne. Unfortunately, the Peshwa, Baji Rao, proved a storm centre. For years he had been intriguing to revive the Maratha confederacy ; and his own personal troubles now lent to him the spur of desperation. A worthless favourite named Trimbakji had murdered the

Brahmin envoy of the Gaekwad. He pleaded his master's orders in justification. The Peshwa affected a threatening bearing towards the British and commenced levying troops.

The Governor-General still hoped that his large forces, in conjunction with the alliances he had recently concluded with Bhopal, Udaipur, Jodhpur, and Kotah would suffice to prevent the hostile combination maturing. But he left nothing to chance. Scindia, who had been discovered to be in correspondence with Nepal, was isolated by skilful strategy, and induced to sign a treaty releasing the Company from its previous obligation to abandon Rajputana to the mercy of the Marathas. Daulat Rao gave up the cause of the Peshwa. Soon afterwards, the Pathan adventurer, Amir Khan, was guaranteed in his new State of Tonk—a step which deprived the Pindaris of one of their ablest leaders. The Peshwa, realizing his progressive isolation, was the first of the Maratha powers to take up arms. He was severely defeated at Kirkee by a small body of British troops, and compelled to retreat in the direction of Satara. But his intrigues had begun to bear fruit. The Arab bodyguard of Appa Sahib attacked the Residency troops at Nagpur. Again the British were successful. These two incidents, while powerless to affect the rounding up of the Pindaris by the great encircling movement, brought destruction upon their authors. Troops were hurried to the seat of disorder ; Appa Sahib was placed under surveillance in a British Camp ; the Peshwa was soon flying for his life. Scindia, hedged round by British troops, made no move. But in Indore the partisans of the Pindaris murdered

Tulsi Bai and brought the State troops to the aid of the retreating robbers. A sharp action was fought at Mahidpur in December 1817; the revolting Indore army was completely routed; and the young Holkar remained at the discretion of the British. In February, 1818, the Peshwa's last army was destroyed; his dominions were reduced to order, and a year later his reign was declared at an end. Meanwhile, the main operations had been

crowned with complete success. The Pindari bands were broken up; the leaders slain, and their men dispersed. Even more important than the extirpation of Pindaris was the secondary consequence of the campaign. The

**Destruction of the Maratha Confederacy.**

power of the Marathas was crushed once and for all. Hastings, in his despatch to the Court of Directors, reveals very plainly the manner in which the intrigues of the Peshwa brought about the downfall of the Maratha powers at a time when the sole desire of the British was to destroy the Pindaris. 'The suppressions of a powerful body, professedly banded for the purpose of indiscriminate plunder, and which accompanied its rapine with acts of the most atrocious inhumanity, was in itself an enterprise becoming a British Government. That our motives might be thoroughly unequivocal, it was my anxious wish that the reputation or so laudable a service should alone remunerate the Honourable Company for the effort; and, with premature confidence, I took the liberty of expressing to you my joy at the likelihood of our accomplishing the end, without a particle of defalcation from the possession of any native sovereign. If these hopes have been defeated, it would appear not to have been through any provocation on our part; and if addition shall be made to your territory, it will be seen that it is only through the imperious necessity of guarding against the speedy renewal of a treachery so rooted in its nature as to admit of no other prevention.'

In this strange, almost accidental manner, the last obstacle to British supremacy in India was removed. The Maratha confederacy died unregretted by contemporaries. Despite the great part it had played in Indian politics for the past century, it had made no positive contribution to the development of true nationalism. Its essential principle was a frank exploitation, for the benefit of a handful of powerful chieftains, of the resources of subject territories and of conquered peoples. The misery which it had inflicted was incalculable; the benefits it had conferred were nugatory. Racked by jealousies, the Maratha confederacy could never have formed the nucleus of united India, even if the political incapacity of its nominal leaders had not placed such a project outside the realm of possibility. The oft-quoted epitaph on the Maratha power, written as it was by the wise, the humane and the liberal Munro, seems to indicate only too clearly its defects. 'The Maratha Government from the first has been one of devastation. It was continually destroying all within its reach, and never repairing. All other Hindu states took a pride in the improvement of the country, and in the construction of pagodas, tanks, canals and other public works. The Marathas have done nothing of this kind; their work has been chiefly desolation. They did not seek their revenue in the improvement of the country, but in the exaction of the established *Chauth* from their neighbours and in predatory incursions to levy more.'

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## CHAPTER II

### Domestic Reconstruction

WITH the extirpation of the Pindaris and the removal of all danger from the side of the Marathas, the way became clear for constructional work of every kind. The territories which had suffered so long from anarchy and depredation began to assume a semblance of order. Contemporary evidence is still worth reading on these points. Tod, the sympathetic annalist of Rajputana, described Mewar about the year 1819 as follows :—

- ‘ Expression might be racked for phrases which should adequately delineate the miseries all classes had endured. The capital will serve as a specimen of the country Udaipur which formerly reckoned 50,000 houses within the walls, had not now 3,000 houses occupied ; the rest were in ruin, the rafters being taken for firewood. The realization of the spring harvest of 1818 from the entire fiscal land was about £4,000.’ But with the conclusion of the subsidiary alliance with the British, an extraordinary change came over the situation. We may again quote Tod :—‘ On the same day, within eighteen months subsequent to the signature of the treaty, about 300 towns and villages were simultaneously re-inhabited, and the land which for many years had been a stranger to the ploughshare was broken up. The chief commercial mart Bhilwara, which showed not a vestige of humanity, rapidly rose from ruin, and in a few months contained twelve hundred houses, half of which were occupied by foreign merchants.’

The case of Mewar was typical. Rajputana, relieved

from the scourge of Maratha forays, steadily regained the prosperity to which it had so long been a stranger. Anarchy was repressed ; boundaries were rectified ; and the relations between the sovereign rulers and their vassal nobility placed upon a satisfactory footing. This beneficial result is by no means solely ascribable to the suppression of the Pindaris. The re-emergence of a paramount power after so many decades was of itself an inducement to the burial of those internecine feuds which had for long racked Rajputana. State ceased to fight with state, and clan with clan. Never since the hey-day of the Mughal Empire had the Rajputs known such peace. In the Central Provinces similar changes took place. Part of the dominions of the former Rajas of Nagpur was handed over to the Nizam ; part was administered by Raghoji Bhonsla's son who sat in the place of Appa Sahib ; and part was retained in British hands. The territory which Holkar had been compelled to cede was taken under a firm and equitable administration. Thus freed from the curse of plundering forays and controlled by a power strong enough to enforce its commands, the sorely harassed districts of Central India recovered their prosperity so completely that within a few years' time the very name of Pindari had dropped out of popular memory.

The epoch which followed the downfall of the Maratha confederacy is notable for the work of great administrators, who brought peace and prosperity where anarchy had reigned. The names of these men, among whom Munro, Mountstuart Elphinstone, Malcolm and Metcalfe are the greatest, deserve to be remembered with gratitude by men of our own generation. They had to create order out of desolation. The first step was the reconstruction of the land revenue system, for, as Munro said, ' In India, ' whoever regulates the assessment of the land rent, ' holds in his hand the mainspring of the public peace.'

The  
Recon-  
structors.

They found little assistance in the task. They were confronted by vast differences of local conditions and local customs which, as a result of protracted anarchy, and the loss or destruction of most of the land records, had been beyond measure complicated. We have already noticed in Bengal that the policy of the British was to increase the power of the zamindars. But in Madras, Bombay, Central India and Hindustan, conditions made such a policy impracticable. In certain localities, the village community still survived in a form which made renaissance possible. In others, it had crumbled beneath the flood of anarchy until nothing remained to mark the place it had once occupied. Hence, the early British administrators could adopt no uniform policy. Later generations have blamed them, somewhat unjustly, for ignoring the village community. But where it existed, they gladly utilized it. They united it up with the higher administration by regularizing the functions of the village officials, and taking them into the salaried service of the State. In places where it had disappeared or decayed, they could not re-create it. Munro, the father of the land settlement in Madras, devoted all his energies to developing the *ryotwari* system under which Government dealt directly with each individual cultivator, and framed its demands in accordance with the yearly assessment. The work which he accomplished was magnificent and enduring; but the mistake was commonly made of fixing the assessment figure too high. In Hindustan a different method was pursued. The village community being still in a flourishing condition, the British continued the ancient plan of joint responsibility, settling the revenue in consultation with the villagers themselves. In Bombay, throughout the vast territory formerly belonging to the Peshwa, a settlement similar in some degree to that in Madras was introduced by the wise Elphinstone.

Land  
Settle-  
ment.

Second only in general importance to the settlement of the land must be ranked the organization of justice.

In Madras and throughout the Maratha country, arrangements were made to settle minor disputes by village panchayats, and more serious matters by the decision of the Collector. The panchayat system strongly appealed to the British authorities, and strenuous endeavours—to which justice is not always done by modern writers—were made to secure its universal operation. It did not, however, flourish as was expected; and could only be operated throughout Hindustan with considerable modifications. Perhaps too much was expected of it at a time when the country-side was but slowly recovering from decades of disorder; for even those British officers who favoured its development most strongly were reluctantly compelled to admit that people themselves often preferred the award of a European.

The importance of the work accomplished by Munro, Metcalfe and Elphinstone in conferring peace and order on vast stretches of territory can scarcely be exaggerated. Fully as remarkable as the results achieved was the noble spirit in which the task was undertaken. The following extract from a minute of Munro, dated December 31, 1824, illustrates at once the benevolent aims of the great administrator and his conception of the manner in which those aims were to be accomplished :—

‘The peculiar character and condition of the ryots require that some laws should be made specially for their protection. The non-resistance of the ryots in general to oppression has been too little attended to in our regulations. We make laws suited to the needs of an Englishman, and are surprised that they should have no operation. A law might be a very good one in England and useless here. This arises from the different characters of the people. In England, the people resist oppression, and it is their spirit which

Adminis-  
trative  
Ideals.

'gives efficacy to the law. In India, the people are rarely able to resist oppression, and the law intended to secure them from it can, therefore, derive no aid from themselves. Though the ryots frequently complain of illegal exactions, they very seldom resist them; they more commonly submit without complaining and they often abscond when they have no longer means of paying for them. As, therefore, they will not protect themselves by resisting injustice, we must endeavour to protect them by laws which would be unnecessary in England.'

It was inevitable that mistakes should be made. The yearly assessments were commonly too high. Further, with all the care which many of the early administrators took to discover the original institutions of the people among whom they worked, these institutions had been so largely obliterated by anarchy and misery, that it was frequently necessary to devise substitutes on the spur of the moment. Such substitutes were not always effective; and in addition were sometimes out of harmony with the genius of the people. It is interesting in this connection to quote Elphinstone's statement of a balance of profit and loss resulting from the attempt to introduce rapidly and completely civilized methods of administration where anarchy long prevailed:—

'To sum up the effects of our revenue, police and judicial systems, we have lighter, more equal and more certain assessment; less speculation and consequently less profit to the agents of Government. In Police, more attention and more vigour, but less violence, and, so far, less efficiency; in civil justice, the great change is that Government is taking on itself the whole responsibility of protecting peoples' rights; but there is more form, more purity and more delay in some cases and less in others. In criminal justice, more system, more scruples, more trials, more acquittals, more punishment for all crimes except robbery, and for that both less certain and less severe.'



What of the Future? It is of more than ordinary interest, from the standpoint of the twentieth century, to discover the ideas of these great British administrators regarding the future of the connection between India and Great Britain. The clear-sighted Elphinstone wrote in 1819 :—

‘ If we can manage our native army and keep out the Russians, I see nothing to threaten the safety of our Empire—until the natives become enlightened under our tuition, and a separation becomes desirable to both parties.’

Like Elphinstone, Munro believed that the time would surely come, in however far distant a future, when the English would entirely withdraw from India leaving an indigenous Government in a position of independence. He wrote in December, 1824. ‘ We should look upon India not as a temporary possession, but as one that is to be maintained permanently until the natives shall, in some future age, have abandoned most of their superstitions and prejudices and become sufficiently enlightened to frame a regular Government for themselves and to conduct and preserve it Whenever such a time shall arrive, it will probably be best for both countries that the British control over India should gradually be withdrawn. That the desirable change may, in some future age, be effected in India, there is no cause to despair. Such a change was at one time in Britain at least as hopeless as it is here. We shall in time so far improve the character of our Indian subjects as to enable them to govern and protect themselves.’

Contemporary versus Modern Ideas. It is perfectly clear that Munro and his contemporaries never conceived that self-government could be given to India on a popular basis. It is also plain, however, that they regarded the political independence of India under some form of eastern autocracy as being the goal

at which British policy should aim. So strong was their conviction of the desirability of this political freedom that they were prepared to face the consequence, which seemed then inevitable, of the severance of all connection between India and Great Britain. They did not envisage the future emergence of what we now call the Commonwealth conception; a larger unity within which nationalities can realize the conditions necessary for the perfection of their growth. The British administrators of the early nineteenth century saw clearly that great Empires are but the sepulchres of nations. Before their eyes was the precedent of the United States of America; not the spectacle of the Self-Governing Dominions. They had seen people of predominantly English stock sever political connection with Great Britain, and erect out of British colonies the foundations of an independent power. It was some such destiny, unquestionably, that they foreshadowed for India: since men had not as yet conceived a polity which enables nations severally to develop their individual life, while jointly preserving their freedom and controlling their destiny in one all-embracing republic.

The Governor-Generalship of Hastings is a period primarily of construction. The British power had become paramount in India, unting to itself the other powers in the bond of subsidiary alliances. In the words of Sir Alfred Lyall, 'Henceforward it became the universal principle of public policy that every State in India (outside the Punjab and Sind) should make over the control of its foreign policy to the British Government, and should defer to British advice regarding the internal management so far as might be necessary to cure disorders or scandalous misrule.' But we must carefully notice that the policy of 'subordinate isolation' contained the seeds of an evil almost as grave as that which had sprung from non-intervention. As I have remarked

in another place, 'Its weakness lay in the fact that 'it was impossible to separate entirely the internal 'and external administration. If the internal administration was bad, it was sure to affect the relations 'with the Government; but as the Government 'refused to interfere with internal administration, affairs 'were liable to go from bad to worse until the external 'relations of the State became such as to compel 'interference.'

Along with the establishment of British supremacy there went, as we have seen, the ordering and settling of the territories which now passed under British control. The Governor-General realized to the full the extent of the responsibilities thus placed upon the shoulders of the Company. In a letter written to the Court of Directors in June, 1818, he said 'The great work achieved by 'your arms ought to be followed by a peace, of which 'you will be solicitous to avail yourselves, as the 'fortunate opportunity for disseminating instruction and 'morals among immense communities, lamentably 'deficient in the conception of social principles and 'duties. A vast field for the amelioration of man lies 'before us.'

After more than nine years of unremitting labour, Lord Hastings made over charge on the first day of 1823 to Mr. John Adam, the senior Member of Council. In the following August, Lord Amherst arrived. It might well have seemed that the new Governor-General was destined to experience an easy term of office. British arms were now supreme; the Company's territories had been vastly extended; the treasury was full. And yet these presages of peace and good order were destined to be belied. This was in large degree the consequence of the new situation, in which the British were placed. Having no longer any open antagonism to fear, the Company's officials devoted themselves heart and soul to carrying out the plans they

considered most conducive to the welfare of the people. Unfortunately, the anarchy which had so long prevailed over large portions of India hampered at every turn the process of reconstruction. There were multitudes of men



LORD AMHERST

quite incapable of pursuing peaceful avocations ; the land was filled with soldiers out of employment. **Diffi-** Many Indian princes chafed under restrictions **culties.** to which they had not been accustomed. Moreover, throughout the whole country, the remedial measures now being introduced awoke in a conservative population a sullen opposition far more difficult to combat than open disorder. Throughout the greater part of India, the ancient autocratic system of rule had disappeared : and while the Mughal administrative

structure had broken down hopelessly in the course of a century of anarchy the British system designed to take its place was still clumsy and full of anomalies. The population acquiesced in the new regime, as they had acquiesced previously in so many other changes. By those who preferred order it was accepted without enthusiasm; to those who had found their profit in anarchy, it was utterly hateful. In Bengal and Madras, where British rule had long been a familiar feature, little trouble was experienced; but in Hindustan, Central India, and the newly acquired territories of the Bombay Presidency, a continuous series of small insurrectionary movements took place.

Nor were the restiveness and disease which characterized the internal condition of India during the administration of Lord Amherst allayed by the course of foreign events. The Government found itself obliged to secure its eastern borders against the incursions of the Burmese. The kingdom of Burma, a military principality, which had sprung up in the eighteenth century, now included all the country round the Irrawadi and Salwin; it extended southward along the coast of the Bay of Bengal, and it had acquired complete control over the head-waters of the Bráhma Putra. Burmese expeditions were subjugating the whole country to the north of Bengal, and multitudes of people fled into British territory. Soon collisions occurred between detachments of Burmese troops and British outposts. Lord

Amherst was not in the least anxious for war; but peace was rendered impossible by the extraordinary truculence of the Burmese authorities. Never before in conflict with any civilized power, they possessed an exaggerated estimate of their own military strength. After all redress had been refused, the Governor-General was reluctantly compelled to send an Army to Rangoon. The country was

Foreign  
Affairs.

War with  
Burma.

unfamiliar and unhealthy; the Burmese resistance obstinate. But by February, 1826, the Burmese had been compelled to agree to a war indemnity of a crore of rupees, to the cession of the provinces of Arakan and Tenasserim; and to a recognition of the British Protectorate over Assam, Manipur and Cachar.

The consequences of the first Burmese war are of some importance. The frontier of the Company's possessions was effectively secured upon the north-east, and its territories augmented by the addition of large populous provinces differing in race, customs and language from any portion of India. But the effects of the campaign upon the domestic affairs of India were even more noteworthy. The early reverses suffered by small British forces had inspired hope in those who disliked the supremacy of the Company in India. The Burmese had a great reputation, not merely for their proficiency in warfare but also for their skill in the black-arts; many persons, therefore, hoped that the British would be ruined. The failure of these hopes came as a great and for the moment final, shock to the disorderly elements in India. Moreover the pinnacle of British military reputation was raised higher than ever by the ease with which certain small insurrectionary movements were suppressed. The fortress of Bharatpur, which had dared once more to defy the Company, was easily captured in January, 1826; the usurper who had seized it was dethroned, and the child Maharaja reinstated. One result of the first Burmese war was thus to raise the prestige of British to a great height. The elements of opposition did not

dare to raise their heads for the next quarter of a century. British administrators were, therefore, filled with a sense of complete security. Rendered confident by the entire absence of serious internal trouble, they pushed ahead with more enthusiasm than caution in their task of

conferring the advantages, as they conceived them, of western civilization upon a reluctant population. But the opposing forces, though driven beneath the surface, remained in reality as formidable as ever; and scarcely a quarter of a century afterwards, the British realized, to their dismay and disappointment, that in the last resort their hold upon India depended, like that of the many powers who had preceded them, far too much upon their own military strength and far too little upon the active co-operation of the people on whose behalf they laboured.

In the light of subsequent events, it is important to notice that the Burmese War had been accompanied by certain remarkably significant incidents. A mutiny occurred in the 46th Bengal Native Infantry, who objected on various grounds, to crossing the sea. This might have meant nothing more than a conflict between the obstinacy of the authorities and the susceptibilities of the troops. But Sir Edward Paget, the Commander-in-Chief, in giving evidence before a Committee of the House of Commons on the condition of discipline in the Indian Army, made the following significant statement:—

Ominous Incidents. ‘It is impossible for me to conceal from the Committee that there is a great spirit of insubordination in the Army, at least in that I have the opportunity of more particularly seeing, which is the Bengal Army. A sort of spirit of independence prevails among the officers which is totally inconsistent with our idea of military discipline. I had abundant opportunities of seeing it myself, and had the proofs before me of that spirit; and I have reason to think from what I have subsequently heard that it is by no means subsiding.’ Had these words been accorded the respect they deserve, it is scarcely conceivable that the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 could have occurred. But the prestige of the Indian Army stood so high, its exploits were so conspicuous,

that it is scarcely surprising to find that small but significant symptoms of ill-omen were ignored. The storming of the fortress of Bharatpur, to which we have already referred, set the seal upon the pride and confidence with which the British authorities regarded their Indian regiments.

The Governor-General, who had up to this time been occupied by the occurrences, foreign and domestic, which we have already noticed, found himself at leisure in 1826 to make a tour in other parts of India. At Cawnpore he received in audience Ghazi-ud-din Haidar, the ruler of Oudh, who had been allowed by Lord Hastings, in return for a loan of money at the time of Nepalese War, to assume the title of King. Already in Oudh the evil fruits of the policy of subordinate isolation were becoming manifest. Divorced from responsibility, wedded to luxury, the Royal administration was an open scandal. None the less, Ghazi-ud-din contrived to persuade Lord Amherst that he was much maligned, and that the British authorities were unjust in the restrictions which they placed upon his freedom of action. Accordingly the King of Oudh was treated with favour, instead of receiving a stern warning. The result was, as we shall have occasion to notice, disastrous. Proceeding to Agra, the Governor-General received the Princes of Central India in Durbar. He then set a remarkable precedent by retiring to the hill-station of Simla for the hot weather; an example which was, after some hesitation, followed by his successors with the most faithful regularity. The growth of this settlement, which commenced with a single log hut in an Indian State territory, into the head-quarters of the Imperial Government, is typical of the haphazard way in which administrative capitals have been suffered to grow up in India. The site of Simla is ill-adapted to the requirements of a large town; so much so that a well-



considered project to transfer the summer capital to the admirable situation of Ranikhet was only frustrated in later years in consequence of the tragic death of Lord Mayo, the Viceroy who planned the change.

At the beginning of 1828, Lord Amherst retired. Under his administration ordered progress had made great strides. The country was quiet, the prestige of the British Raj imposingly high. It was under these circumstances that Lord William Cavendish Bentinck succeeded to the Governor-Generalship. He was no stranger to India, for he had previously held the position of Governor of Madras, from which he was recalled owing to an outbreak of mutiny among the troops at Vellore in 1806—an occurrence for which he was in no way responsible. He had for some time been in intimate relations with the Directors and with the Board of Control. He thus enjoyed the confidence of the home authorities to a remarkable degree.

Lord William threw himself with energy into the task of westernizing India. His was a generation which witnessed Catholic emancipation, the evangelical revival, the abolition of slavery and the passage of the Reform Bill. A typical man of his age, he was determined, while avoiding any intervention in the affairs of the Indian States, to set himself the task of promoting progress and reform among the people of India. Utterly indifferent to the opinion of the Anglo-Indian community, he pursued his own line, confident of the support of the Directors. He drastically reduced military allowances; he lowered the rate of interest on Government loans; he reorganized the settlement establishment of the North-West Frontier Provinces. By these means he effected a saving of nearly two million sterling a year for reducing the Burmese War debt. While in the process of carrying through such measures, the Governor-

General devoted himself earnestly to the task of diffusing western ideas and institutions among the population at large. In this direction his zeal was unbounded. A quarter of a century before he had written a minute detailing with great enthusiasm the benefits which were likely to follow Lord Wellesley's conquest. 'For the first time the blessings of universal tranquillity may be expected. That system of policy which could embrace the whole of India, which could comprehend in one bond of mutual defence and forbearance the predatory chiefs of this great Empire, deserves the admiration of all the civilized world. That system which has founded British greatness upon Indian happiness demands in a broad manner the applause of this country.'

The passage of time did not weaken his early enthusiasm and like many another of his day he was convinced that 'universal tranquillity' was in a fair way to be accomplished. During his period of office there was no external war, while internal disturbances were limited in number. There were some minor disputes in Rajputana; a Kol rising; and a little disturbance in Assam. In all these cases, official action was tardy and hesitating. In the affairs of Indian States, the interference of Government was strictly limited. On account of the insufferable mismanagement of local authorities, Mysore was taken over in 1832; while the adjacent principality of Coorg was permanently occupied. Elsewhere, the Indian Princes were left more and more to their own devices. This policy was unquestionably mistaken in the case of Oudh, where things were going from bad to worse. Lord William Bentinck's reluctance to do more than address solemn verbal remonstrances to the King, rendered inevitable at a subsequent date trouble which might have been entirely averted by timely and determined measures. Disorders of various kinds broke out

The  
Indian  
States.

in Hyderabad, Gwalior, Indore and Udaipur. No efforts were made to compose the quarrels of the Rajput States. Provided British India remained tranquil, the Governor-General refused to look outside its borders. Immersed as he was in his schemes of reform and retrenchment, he took no heed of the unrest which lay beneath the calm surface of Indian politics. He did indeed concern himself to some extent with frontier affairs, being at pains to arrange a personal interview with Maharaja Ranjit Singh in October, 1831. He also succeeded in opening up the Sind Valley to British trade by despatching Alexander Burnes on a mission to the Amirs. But with the exception of these comparatively minor activities, Lord William devoted the major portion of his energies to the kindred subjects of education and social reform.

Various projects for the education of the Company's servants in the languages and customs of India had from time to time taken shape in more or less effective form; but with the exception of private benevolences, such as were so conspicuously associated with the name of Warren Hastings, the Company had concerned itself too little with the education of its Indian subjects. But in 1813 permission was given to the Governor-General to expend not less than a lakh of rupees annually upon 'the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of science among the inhabitants of the British territories in India.' But largely owing to the disagreements which sprang up between those who desired to christianize India and those who would have nothing but secular education, as well as to the quarrels between the supporters of Western education and the champions of the traditional learning of the East, the progress made was smaller than otherwise would be the case. In British

**Educa-  
tional  
Progress.**

India between 1800 and 1830 there was considerable private educational activity, mainly on the part of the Missionaries to whose labours the country owes such institutions as the Madras Christian College and the

**Early Aims and Efforts.** Wilson College of Bombay. Government for some time hesitated, not because it lacked the will, but because it was uncertain in what direction its efforts would be most beneficial.

That education must be given, was generally admitted : that the gift would make the task of the British more difficult, was fully realized. The Marquis of Hastings, in particular, was definite upon both these points. He wrote : ' This Government never will be influenced by ' the erroneous position that to spread information among ' men is to render them less tractable and less submissive ' to authority. . . . It would be treason to British ' sentiments to imagine that it ever could be the principle ' of this Government to perpetuate ignorance in order to ' secure paltry and dishonest advantages over the ' blindness of the multitude.'

Hastings was as good as his word ; he and his wife established schools, and maintained them from their private means, besides patronizing a college founded by Bengali gentlemen. But the difficulty in deciding how best Government could foster the education of the country, and what kind of instruction should be provided, led to the waste of considerable time. Gradually, however, the urgency of the matter was realized ; and few questioned that the Company ought to take it up in

**Liberal Views.** right earnest. This opinion was encouraged by the liberal sentiments characteristic of the period, and fostered by the generous inclinations of such men as Elphinstone, who wrote in a minute of March, 1824, ' It is now well understood that ' in all countries the happiness of the poor depends in ' great measure on their education. It is by means of it ' alone that they can acquire those habits of prudence

'and self-respect from which all other good qualities  
'spring ; and if there is a country where such habits are  
'required, it is this. We have all often heard of the ills  
'of early marriages and over-flowing population ; of the  
'savings of a life squandered on some one occasion  
'of festivity ; of the helplessness of the rayats which  
'renders them a prey to money-lenders ; of their  
'indifference to good clothes or houses, which has been  
'urged on some occasions as an argument against  
'lowering the public demands for them ; and, finally, of  
'the vanity of all laws to protect them where no individual  
'can be found who has spirit enough to take advantage  
'of those who acted in their favour. There is but one  
'remedy for all this, which is education.'

The authorities being convinced of the responsibilities  
which lay to their hands, it only remained to  
Macan- consider how best to discharge them. We  
lay's have already mentioned the controversy  
Influence. between the exponents of the Eastern and  
Western learning. This dispute was finally settled by  
the intervention of Macanlay, who had come to India as  
the first Law Member of the Governor-General's Council.  
Unfortunately the bias which characterizes so much of  
this writer's work, and his unconscious tendency to  
subordinate truth to an epigram, becomes as apparent in  
his strictures upon oriental learning and literature as in  
his failures to render justice to such men as Warren  
Hastings. In 1835 he penned the famous Minute in  
which he stated that the question as to whether Govern-  
ment should encourage Eastern or Western learning was  
easily settled ; for it simply resolved itself into the  
'consideration whether, when we can patronize sound  
'philosophy and true history, we shall countenance, at  
'the public expense, medical doctrines which would  
'disgrace an English farrier : astronomy which would  
'move laughter in girls at an English boarding school,  
'history abounding in kings thirty feet high and reigns

'thirty thousand years long ; and geography made of ' seas of treacle and seas of butter.' Quite apart from the offensive dogmatism with which Macaulay pronounced his opinion, his ignorant depreciation of oriental literature was most unfortunate. For by committing Government to an uncompromising policy of Western education, he did serious damage to the progress of learning. In many Indian villages, particularly in those provinces which, like Bengal, had for long enjoyed comparatively settled conditions, there were schools. These schools were neither very efficient nor very enlightened as is clear from the contemporary accounts of the brutal punishments inflicted by ignorant teachers upon disorderly pupils : but at least they existed. Had they been encouraged and regularized, they would have provided a suitable instrument for the education of the masses. The determination of Government to concentrate upon Western learning led to their neglect by the authorities and their progressive abandonment by the people. Only within recent years has a determined attempt been made to revive them. But while we cannot acquit Macaulay and his colleagues of blame for a policy which inflicted injury upon the masses, it is only fair to remember that they did much for the education of the classes. Had it not been for their policy of spreading Western ideas throughout the upper and middle classes, there would never have arisen, in less than a century, that powerful body of educated opinion to which, above all, we owe the growth of the Indian nationalist movement. It is perhaps easy to be wise after the event, but from the modern standpoint we can see that neither Macaulay with his uncritical condemnation of oriental learning ; nor his antagonists with their equally indiscriminate praise of Persian and Sanskrit, were entirely in the right. What was really required was a blend of both policies : higher education

For Evil  
and for  
Good.

along Western lines for those who could profit by it, combined with the encouragement of humbler indigenous instruction for the benefit of the masses. Had this expedient been adopted, it might have been possible on the one hand to provide a sound modern education for the upper and middle classes ; while at the same time fostering the traditional village institutions through which alone learning could have been sustained and encouraged among the bulk of the population.

We may regret the precise measures adopted by Government in carrying out their educational policy : but it is only fair to pay a tribute to their zeal and enthusiasm. In the time of Lord William Cavendish Bentinck, many schools giving instruction of the Western type were established in Bengal and in the Madras Presidency. A new college was erected at Agra ; the Calcutta Medical College was founded ; and altogether a real beginning was made.

Two outstanding achievements in the matter of reform are generally allowed to overshadow the career of Lord William to the exclusion of his other, and equally useful, activities. With the support of the Bengali reformer, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the Governor-General officially prohibited the practice of *Sati* in 1829. This practice, which was of long standing, was still very common : in 1818, 839 burnings had been recorded in the Bengal Presidency ; and in 1828, the year before its prohibition, *Sati* had been practised in 463 cases. The action of the Government roused some feeling among the orthodox Hindus ; but no trouble was experienced in enforcing the measure. The Governor-General was particularly concerned to reassure those who believed that he meditated any attack upon the essentials of the Hindu faith. In a minute written in November, 1829, he stated, ' The first and primary object of my heart is the benefit of the Hindus. I know nothing so important to the improve-

' Sati '  
prohibited.

ment of their future conditions as the establishment of a purer morality, whatever their belief, and a more just conception of the will of God. The first step to this better understanding will be dissociation of religious belief from blood and murder. . . . I write and feel as a legislator for the Hindus and as I believe many enlightened Hindus think and feel.'

In another direction also, Lord William's administration witnessed an attempt at the 'dissociation of religious belief from blood and murder.' Favoured by the anarchy of eighteenth century, the ancient secret society of the Thags, which can be traced back in the history at least as far as the fourteenth century, had increased its depredations to an astonishing extent. Its members callously murdered travellers, into whose confidence they had ingratiated themselves, looking upon their victims as sacrifices pleasing to the goddess on whose protection they relied. They had regular burial places for their victims in which the graves were prepared in advance. No fewer than 274 of this burial places actually existed in use in the province of Oudh. Thanks to the energy of Colonel Sleeman, the Thag organization was destroyed, the gangs hunted down and their members bound over. By these measures the security of travellers was largely insured, and a public scandal removed.

This successful attack upon a criminal organization does credit to the efficiency of justice. But the system of administration then in vogue was susceptible of many defects, chief among which was the inadequacy of the Courts of Appeal and Circuit set up by Lord Cornwallis. Lord William determined to abolish these courts altogether ; and to extend the competence of local courts of first instance. At the same time justice was safeguarded by vesting the appellate jurisdiction in a District Judge. It was in connection with these processes of reorganization that

Thagi  
suppressed.

Judicial  
Reform.



the Governor-General initiated a most salutary reform.

**Begin-  
nings of  
'Indiani-  
zation.'**

We should carefully notice that in staffing the judicial service, Lord William steadily pursued the policy of employing Indians. He carried the same idea into the recruitment of the administrative services. In our present age we take the policy of 'Indianization' so much as a matter of course that we may well be inclined to underestimate the courage required to initiate the first step. Hitherto, the Company had shown great reluctance in utilizing the services of Indians. Lord Cornwallis in particular had definitely set his face against the employment of an Indian element in all but the most subordinate capacities. Lord William decisively reversed this policy, entrusting Indian officers with responsible judicial and executive duties, for which they received adequate salaries. He was led to adopt this plan partly by the resulting financial economies, and partly on account of his own liberal views. The policy which he initiated received formal endorsement when the Company's Charter was renewed in 1833. Section 87 of the Act laid down that 'No native of the same territories, nor any natural born subject of His Majesty resident therein shall by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour, or any of them, be disabled from holding any place, office or employment under the Company.' Unfortunately, in subsequent years the principle thus rightly laid down was not put effectively into operation.

When in 1833 the Charter of the Company came up for renewal, Indian affairs were once more made a subject of investigation by a Parliamentary Committee. The last relic of the old trade monopoly, the China traffic, was abandoned; and the Company's dividends, now fixed at the rate of 10 guineas per cent, were made a charge on the revenues of India. The plan was unobjectionable, for the payments represented legitimate interest on capital sunk in the country;

**Changes  
in 1833.**

and this interest could not be increased in such a way as to lay India under tribute to British shareholders. It was unfortunately still possible for India to receive inequitable financial treatment—as witness the cotton duties and certain other incidents which we shall have occasion subsequently to notice—but there was no longer any question of levying direct exactions. In India itself some important changes were introduced. The Governor-General was henceforth styled Governor-General of India instead of Governor-General of Bengal. He was empowered to make laws in Council which should be valid for the whole of India, and he was given a fourth or Legal Member of Council. With all these changes, it was still found convenient to retain political power in the hands of the Company; and the Charter was accordingly renewed for another twenty years.

The liberal and enlightened views with which the responsibilities of England in India were then regarded may be illustrated by an extract from a report of the Parliamentary Committee:—

**Enlightened Views.** ‘On a large view of the state of Indian legislation and of the improvements of which it is susceptible, it is recognized as an indisputable principle that the interests of the native subjects are to be consulted in preference to those of Europeans whenever the two come in competition. . . . Intimately connected with every plan for the good Government of India and for the introduction of ameliorating changes in the present system, is all that relates to the habits, character, and capacity of the native population. It appears that at present they are only employed in subordinate situations in the Revenue, Judicial and Military Departments. They are said to be sufficient observant of the practical merits and defects of our system and to be alive to the grievance of being excluded from a larger share in the executive Government. . . . It is amply borne out by evidence that such exclusion is not war-

'ranted on the score of incapacity for business or the want  
'of application or trustworthiness. It must be recognized  
'that their admission under European control, into the  
'higher offices would strengthen their attachment to  
'British dominions, and would be productive of a great  
'saving in the expenses of the Indian Government.'

But while the Government and the home authorities  
were framing benevolent schemes for the  
Fancy and regeneration of India in accordance with the  
Fact. latest and most approved liberal models,  
scarcely a voice was raised, even among those best  
acquainted with the situation, to tell the reformers that  
they were living in a fool's paradise. In the early  
thirties, however, there appeared in the *India Gazette*  
above the signature of 'A Friend to India' a remarkable  
series of letters from the pen of a civilian named Shore.  
He argued with force and incisiveness that British rule  
had no real hold upon the affections of the people: that  
it had swept away the old landmarks and boundaries  
while erecting others which commanded little respect:  
that it was fast alienating the good opinion of those  
most interested in the prosperity of the country; that  
the recent attempt at wholesale Westernization was not  
only dangerous to the stability of British rule but doomed  
to defeat the benevolent objects with which it was put  
forward. The letters, while they excited some indigna-  
tion, exercised small influence, partly on account of the  
manifest bitterness which inspired them. Had they been  
appreciated at their true value, the history of British  
India would have been different. Particularly note-  
worthy was the charge of alienating substantial sections  
of the community. This was above all true in the North-  
West Provinces. The new settlement organized in that  
region as a means towards financial retrenchment, had  
been carried out by officers who attached far too little  
importance to the traditional rights of the local landed  
aristocracy. Under the operation of a recent sale law,

the estates of many ancient families, now impoverished but none the less influential, passed into the hands of wealthy parvenus who commanded no respect. In former times when land was mortgaged, the money-lender was content to draw his interest since foreclosure was impossible. But under the new law the land could be sold to pay off the capital debt; and a land-owner suddenly found himself beggared by a legal process to which his experience provided no parallel. The general operation of this and similar factors created discontent among those whose support was most essential for any stable system of Government. But there seemed little reason for anxiety. The prestige of the British stood high; England was still in the hey-day of the long peace which lasted from Waterloo to the Crimea. So long as her arms remained consistently triumphant, her position was too strong to be challenged. But deceived by the calmness of the surface they were navigating, the British Indian statesmen of that period failed to observe the formidable storms which were gathering upon the horizon.

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## CHAPTER III

### An Era of Difficulties

IN March, 1835, Lord William Bentinck returned home, leaving Sir Charles Metcalfe in charge. This distinguished civilian would probably have been confirmed as Governor-General, had he not offended the Directors by



SIR CHARLES METCALFE

freeing the press from the restrictions under which it had hitherto laboured. Accordingly the Board nominated an eminent diplomat, Lord Heytesbury ; and the Tory Government accepted that choice without question. But in April the Whigs came into power, and ignoring the

Directors' protests, they cancelled Lord Heytesbury's appointment and conferred the Governor-Generalship on their own nominee, Lord Auckland. This Lord Auckland. was a sacrifice of public to party interests, which brought its own punishment; for Lord Auckland was mainly responsible for the tragic blunder of the first Afghan war.

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century the rapid advance of Russia towards the western frontier of India had been watched with fear and suspicion by British statesmen. By the terms of the treaty of 1814, Great Britain had guaranteed to support Persia against external aggression. But before long it was realized that Russian influence over Persia was too strong to be combated; and in 1828 the Shah of Persia was persuaded, in return for an indemnity, to release Great Britain from the obligation of defending him. British statesmen now began to turn their attention to Afghanistan, which they determined to maintain as a barrier against Russian aggression. Unfortunately, the claims put forward by Persia to Herat complicated the issue, and inclined the British Cabinet to view with excessive alarm certain events which would normally have excited little interest. We can now see that this disquiet was entirely unjustified. There was no reason whatever to interfere in any way with Afghanistan, which was then separated from India by the powerful kingdom of the Punjab on the north, and by the Rajputana desert and Sind on the south. But the British Government were in an alarmist mood; and Lord Auckland's feeble personality placed him at the mercy of unwise counsellors.

In the light, however, of the alarm with which the British Cabinet viewed the extent of Russian influence, the condition of Afghanistan seemed gravely unsatisfactory. The territories generally grouped under that name were ill-defined and

disunited. Internal troubles were threatening. Since 1809 Shah Shuja, the grandson of Ahmad Shah Durrani, had been living as a pensioner in British India. Until 1826, the Kabul territory had no established government; in that year Dost Muhammad Khan of the Barakzai clan made himself lord of Kabul and Ghazni. The new ruler was brave and capable; but his hold on the outlying parts of his dominion was precarious. Kandahar was in revolt and Herat was in the hands of a representative of Shah Shuja's Durrani dynasty. Some time in 1836, the Whig Government received the entirely erroneous information that Dost Muhammad was making efforts to approach the Persian Court for a joint conquest and partition of Herat and its territories. As a matter of fact, the King of Kabul had always exhibited a strong desire for alliance with the British; and the last thing that he wanted was the entry of Persia, with Russia behind, into the existing complications of Afghanistan politics. But when Persia, in pursuit of her own claims, advanced against Herat in 1837, the Cabinet assumed that Dost Muhammad was implicated. The King of Kabul made overtures to the British. He desired Peshawar, then in the hands of Ranjit Singh. There could, of course, be no question of the British breaking with the Punjab; but competent contemporaries agree that diplomatic methods might easily have adjusted the differences between the Sikhs, the Afghans, and the British. Lord

Auckland thought otherwise. He repulsed Dost Muhammad curtly, and that monarch accordingly entered into negotiations with

Russian agents. The siege of Herat was soon brought to an end by giving the Shah a fright. A few British troops were landed in the Persian Gulf; with the result that the Persian army withdrew from Afghanistan. Further, diplomatic pressure from London soon caused the recall and the repudiation of the Russian agent in Kabul. One would have thought that the matter might

Lord  
Auckland's  
Folly.

well have ended here, more particularly as Dost Muhammad was still hoping against hope that the British would help him. He wrote to Lord Auckland offering to have nothing to do with Russia if the Government of India would agree to support him. Unfortunately, the Governor-General, who had convinced himself that Dost Muhammad was unreliable, again replied in an unfriendly manner. He had made up his mind to dethrone Dost Muhammad and to reinstate the exiled Shah Shuja. He was undoubtedly encouraged in this iniquitous project by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who hoped that a weakened Afghanistan would be in no case to resist his own designs.

In July, 1838, a tripartite treaty was executed between the British Government, Ranjit Singh and Shah Shuja. The Maharaja agreed to co-operate for the restoration of Shah Shuja; who was to be supported against opposition by the British army. By this indefensible arrangement, the British Government committed themselves to hostilities with a ruler who had done them no injury. From the very first, the military operations were conducted with complete disregard for ordinary commonsense. Since Ranjit Singh opposed the march of British troops through the Punjab, it was arranged that a contingent from Bombay should march through Sind and join the Bengal army which was to be sent round through the Bolan Pass. The passage of these forces through Sind was a deliberate breach of the treaties concluded with the Amirs of Sind in 1832 which were now violated on the cynical plea of military necessity. Transport difficulties soon made themselves felt; but Shah Shuja was enthroned at Kandahar in May and in July Ghazni was stormed. Dost Muhammad fled into the Uzbeg country while his rival entered Kabul in August.

The criminal folly of the enterprise soon became apparent. Shah Shuja was not personally popular, but the British troops supporting

Agree-  
ment with  
Ranjit  
Singh.

Disaster.



him aroused the frenzied hostility of the Afghans. Lord Auckland added to his other blunders by determining to hold Afghanistan until all signs of disorder had disappeared. For some time there were few signs of the gathering storm. Dost Muhammad surrendered in November, 1840, and was taken to India, but the people at large became steadily more exasperated with Shah Shuja's English friends. The crowning touch of madness was the decision to decrease the allowances made to the warlike tribesmen who kept the Khyber Pass open for communications. The British Envoy, Sir William Macnaghten, utterly failed to establish Shah Shuja's authority. The discontent seething in the country broke out into sudden insurrection. In November, 1841, Burnes, who was to relieve Macnaghten as Envoy, was murdered and the head-quarters of the British Mission was attacked, Akbar Khan, Dost Muhammad's son, put himself at the head of the insurgents; and the incapacity of the military authorities in Kabul enabled him to dictate his own terms. In January, 1842, the British forces started on their retreat down the Khyber; but the neighbouring tribes attacked them ceaselessly until at length, out of 4,000 men, a single survivor reached Jalalabad, gallantly held against overwhelming odds by General Sale. General Nott, however, still held Kandahar against all attempts to dislodge him.

The criminal blunders of the Whig Cabinet and of Lord Auckland had now brought terrible punishment. Fortunately, a Conservative Government had come into power in July, 1841, and before the Khyber disaster occurred, they had appointed Lord Ellenborough to replace Lord Auckland as Governor-General. Lord Ellenborough arrived in February, 1842, with the declared intention of reversing the policy of his predecessor. His first idea was to bring military operations to a summary end; but he soon found that it was impossible to adopt such a course.

General Pollock, who was entrusted with the task of avenging the recent disasters, forced the passage of the Khyber and relieved Jalalabad, while General Nott advanced to Ghazni and destroyed the Fort. The two forces effected a junction and after rescuing the English captives retired from Kabul. Dost Muhammad was allowed to return to Afghanistan unconditionally and to resume the throne from which he ought never to have been displaced.

At first it might have seemed that the disastrous activities of Lord Auckland had produced merely a negative result, but in fact, the consequences of the first Afghan War, as was realized later, were very serious. The ultimate triumph of the British, which inflamed the grievances of malcontents, had by no means neutralized the initial disaster which revived their hopes. The prestige of British arms had been fatally lowered; and the Company's forces were no longer regarded as invulnerable. The troubles in Afghanistan came at a moment when the people of India were resenting more and more the intrusion of Western ideas and Western methods in every department of their daily life. But this attitude might well have been transient, had British prestige not been successfully challenged. In which case, the country would probably have acquiesced in policies which it did not understand and could not actively approve. But the British disasters in Afghanistan inspired the reactionary elements in India with doubt as to whether the march of events was quite so resistless as it seemed. The first Afghan War unquestionably smoothed the path for the resistance of the Sikhs, and afterwards for the great reaction of 1857.

An immediate result of the first Afghan War was the annexation of Sind. This incident is extremely discreditable to British good faith. As a result of the treaties made from time to

Consequences  
of the  
Afghan  
Enter-  
prise.

Sind  
annexed.

time, the independence of the Amirs who ruled the country had been gradually restricted. Their administration was undoubtedly inefficient, and their removal was much desired by enthusiastic British reformers. But treaties are treaties; and the violation of solemn obligations, especially by the stronger of two parties, is morally indefensible. The policy pursued by the Government can only be described as Machiavellian; the natural resentment of the Amirs was deliberately inflamed until it broke out into open resistance. Sir Charles Napier, who was despatched to Sind by Lord Ellenborough in 1842, paid no regard whatever to their treaty rights. He made up his mind that annexation was inevitable; and his aggressive attitude provoked a rising. A Sindi army was defeated at Miani in February, 1843, by a ridiculously small body of British troops. Next month another engagement produced a similar result. The Amirs were deposed, Sind was annexed, and Napier became the first Governor. He performed the difficult task of restoring order to the province with conspicuous firmness and skill. It is impossible to defend upon any grounds of morality the proceedings which led to the annexation. The only thing that can be said is that the establishment of a settled Government unquestionably redounded to the advantage of the inhabitants.

In another direction also Ellenborough carried matters with a strong hand. The politics of the State of Gwalior fell into confusion in 1843. Factions were quarrelling in the court; all real authority had passed into the hands of the army which was now 40,000 strong and thoroughly insubordinate. The Governor-General was alarmed at the possibility of the Gwalior forces making common cause with the Sikhs to plunder Hindustan; and he determined accordingly to settle Gwalior affairs in a summary fashion. At the end of 1843 British troops advanced into Gwalior territory and defeated the Gwalior army, then in full revolt

**Gwalior  
Affairs.**

against the Regent acting for the child Maharaja, in a hard-fought battle at Maharajpur. This engagement, together with another conflict which took place on the same day, enabled the disorderly militia to be disbanded. The Gwalior army was reduced to 9,000 men; supplemented by a British contingent of 10,000 organized on the lines of an ordinary subsidiary force. Very little consideration was shown to the susceptibilities of the Gwalior Durbar and the treaties governing the relations of the State with the British were ignored. The territories of Scindia were, indeed, left intact, but the arbitrary and ruthless conduct of the Governor-General lent an unpleasant atmosphere to the whole procedure.

Almost immediately after the settlement of Gwalior affairs, Lord Ellenborough, whose arrogance **Lord** had excited the hostility of the Court of **Hardinge.** Directors, was summarily recalled, despite the support which he continued to receive from the Government of the day. He was succeeded by Sir Henry Hardinge, a veteran of the Peninsular War, in July, 1844.

The new Governor-General was able to devote his first eighteen months of office to domestic **Domestic** matters. During the administration of his **Progress.** two predecessors, the educational progress had been considerable. Medical Colleges were founded; a system of Government scholarships was brought into existence; and schools on Western lines began to spring up in various parts of the country. Lord Hardinge, as he afterwards became, threw himself with zeal into the promotion of education among the middle classes; and by deciding to favour, for official appointments, candidates who had received an education of the Western type, laid the foundations of that close connection between educational proficiency and Government service which has been by no means an unmixed blessing to the cultural progress of the country. In another direction

also, the Governor-General began to grapple with fresh responsibilities. In the time of Lord Auckland steps had been taken to revive existing irrigation works, and to project new ones upon an unprecedented scale. Lord Hardinge took up these schemes, and made considerable progress in the designs for the Ganges canal. Social reform also attracted him: he made arrangements for the



LORD HARDINGE AND STAFF

extinction of the practice of human sacrifices in the hill tracts of Orissa, and totally suppressed the current rite of burying fragments of living victims annually in the fields in order to increase the fertility of the soil. Unfortunately, the Governor-General was soon diverted from these benevolent activities by the necessity for encountering a military peril of the first magnitude.

We have already noticed that as a result of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's loyal adherence to the British alliance, his Empire remained entirely independent. By sheer force of character, combined with an unerring judgment of men, he had succeeded in keeping in subjection his nobles, his

Ranjit  
Singh's  
Empire  
and Death.

dependencies and his army. His hand was heavy over the Punjab; but none dared raise their head against Sikh domination. Ranjit Singh himself might weigh down the peasants with his exactions of 50 per cent of their gross produce, but he suffered no one else to molest them. In June, 1839, 'The Lion of the Punjab' died, and with the removal of his personality, the elements of disorder raised their head. He left no worthy successor. His only son, Kharak Singh, survived him but by a few months; and was succeeded by Sher Singh, whose parentage was somewhat doubtful. In 1843, the Maharaja was murdered in consequence of a palace intrigue,

**Confusion.**

and the Lahore Government fell into confusion. Three parties quickly emerged; the Rani Jindan, on behalf of her infant son Dhulip, had a powerful following, but was opposed by a Rajput family whose head was Gulab Singh, ruler of the Hill State of Jammu. The great nobles of the Court constituted a third interest. But the preponderating factor was the army. Partly in consequence of the spirit of brotherhood which inspires the Sikh religion, and partly as a result of confidence in its own strength, the army of Ranjit Singh was something far more formidable than an efficient fighting machine. Like Oliver Cromwell's New Model Army, it was a political influence of the first magnitude, possessing both its own ideas and aspirations and also a well-founded confidence in its power to realize them. The army set up its own representatives, who were virtually supreme in the management of affairs. Revolutions and assassinations followed in quick succession, as prince after prince bid higher and higher for the army's support. The Rani bribed it with double pay and thus for the moment secured its adherence for herself and for her son.

Ever since the death of Ranjit Singh, the British had watched Punjab affairs with great interest. They were, however, determined not to interfere. In 1841 Maharaja

Sher Singh had implored the help of Lord Auckland against his own army. But while the British took no steps against the Punjab, they were dismayed by the chaos which had overtaken Ranjit Singh's great empire. The gates of the north, so long securely barred, stood open once more. The Punjab was no longer India's shield against invasion, and the Company's flank was uncovered. Accordingly, the frontier line on the Sutlej was strengthened by the enlargement of the cantonments at Ferozepur, Ambala and Kasauli. All through 1844-45, the British toiled to preserve the peace. War was the last thing which the Governor-General desired. Writing to Major Broadfoot, his Agent, in 1845, Sir Henry Hardinge said, 'Every despatch from England inculcates a pacific policy. . . . A strong Sikh Government as our advance guard, occupying the five rivers between the Sutlej and the Indus, is a sound military and political arrangement. The advantage is evident ; and British India, already overgrown, requires no addition by the appropriation of territory so long possessed by an ally whose interests have always been opposed to those of the British Government's enemies. But if the indispensable condition of our forbearance be a Sikh Government and if that, after patient trial, be an impossibility, then the question resolves itself into a narrow compass. If the ruling power in the Punjab cannot be, Sikh, it must not be Muhammadan ; in fact, it must be, Sikh or British.' Broadfoot, the man on the spot, confirmed this view. He wrote, 'A strong Sikh Government, such as that of Ranjit Singh, truly independent, and yet bound to us by community of interest and mutual confidence, is the best of all frontiers for us towards the great ocean of Muhammadans between India and Europe. But it must be Sikh and it must be strong, or we must be in the Punjab ourselves.'

The prospects of peace grew steadily worse. The treasury at Lahore began to fail under the drain of double pay for the army; and the Rani was at last face to face with open mutiny. This she succeeded in averting by personal appeals to the soldiery; but before long she realized that her only hope lay in engaging the Sikh forces in war with the British. Either they would be destroyed, or else they would return laden with the spoil of the victorious. Whichever way fortune inclined, they would trouble her no longer. By fostering the vanity, and appealing to the patriotism, of the army, the Rani produced the result she desired. In November, 1845, the troops threatened their officers with death unless they were led across the river to the invasion of British territories. At the beginning of December, Broadfoot wrote privately from Ambala to England: 'You ask if I am employed in preserving peace. Of course, I am; for whatever may be the result, never did Government strive as this Government has done to keep at peace.' But the good intentions of Sir Henry Hardinge and his officers were powerless to avert the course of events.

On December 8, 1845, the Sikh army began to cross the Sutlej. No attempt was made to dispute its passage. The first battle was fought at Mudki, where Sir Hugh Gough defeated the Sikhs badly and captured seventeen guns. The Sikhs proved themselves the most formidable antagonists which the Company's forces ever encountered; and observers were doubtful whether to praise them more highly for their discipline or for their courage. Three days later, the Sikh entrenchments at Ferozeshah were captured, after heavy losses on both sides. After this battle the Punjab forces retreated across the Sutlej. Finding the British not following them, they returned to the attack, but suffered a severe check at Aliwal on January 28, 1846. They then made up their minds to hold the line

Influence  
of the  
Sikh  
Army.

The first  
Sikh War.



on the Sutlej and took up a strong position at Sobraon, to the east of Ferozepur. The final battle of the campaign took place on February 10. After a fierce artillery duel, in which the British guns established complete superiority, the Sikhs were forced to retire precipitately upon a bridge of boats by which they had hoped to secure their retreat. The structure collapsed, and nearly ten thousand fugitives were entrapped and slain in the bed of the river. The army of the Khalsa, though not disgraced, was decisively defeated.

The Governor-General now entered Lahore, and peace was arranged. The land between the Sutlej and the Bias was ceded to the British. The Rani was acknowledged as titular Regent for Dulip Singh; and Henry Lawrence was appointed British Resident. Kashmir, which had also been ceded, was made over to Gulab Singh, who had throughout taken pains to identify himself with the British interests, in return for a crore of rupees.

The temporary arrangement which left power in the hands of a Sikh Council of Regency did not work well. Henry Lawrence was from the first opposed and thwarted by the Court party; but by his sympathetic administration he shortly secured the support of many of the Sikh Sirdars. The Prime Minister was discovered to have been concerned in intrigue against the Raja of Kashmir; and on the request of the friendly Sirdars, a fresh arrangement was sanctioned. The Regency Council was to be presided over by the Resident; and British garrisons were to be maintained in the country for eight years, till the Maharaja came of age. The results of the new plan were excellent. Henry Lawrence, with the help of his brothers George and John, and a band of able frontier officers among whom may be mentioned Charles Mansell and John Nicholson, laboured hard to restore order. The central authority made itself

Tempor-  
ary Settle-  
ment.

Prospects  
of Peace.

firmly felt; *Sati*, infanticide and punishment by mutilation were abolished; roads were repaired, and the province was thrown open to trade. Unfortunately, Lawrence was obliged to return to England in 1848 for reasons of health, leaving the work of settlement barely concluded. The remnant of the Sikh army still remained in existence; the old Court party, still formidable, had been offended by the reforms; and the prospects of lasting peace seemed very dubious. But at the time when Lord Hardinge and his great Lieutenant left India, the growing prosperity of the Punjab was already noticeable.

While the British were thus introducing ordered administration into the one great State which had hitherto lain outside the sphere of their control, signs were not wanting that a dangerous spirit of unrest was afoot. We have already -

**Symptoms of Disease.** noticed how the rapid introduction of political and social changes had affected popular opinion; and how the sensation created by the disasters of 1841-42 had encouraged the belief that the progress of these changes was not, after all, irresistible. Shortly after the conclusion of the first Sikh War, a dangerous agitation broke out at Patna, where rumours were being sedulously circulated that the Government meditated attacks upon the Hindu and Muslim faiths. Moreover, a judicial scandal, the sequel to disturbances arising from the unregulated zeal of missionaries in the Tinnevely District, produced the impression that Government would punish any resistance to Christian propaganda with marked severity. In Oudh, where the administration was going from bad to worse, riots broke out. In the North-West Provinces, where the work of settlement was proceeding, the Talukdars were growing ever more restless at the marked disposition of British officials to favour the cultivators at any cost, and to abolish, with inadequate compensation, prescriptive if oppressive,

seigniorial rights. Yet in spite of these danger-signals, the work of imposing Western ideals upon a conservative people proceeded with undiminished speed. Throughout his Governor-Generalship, Lord Hardinge threw himself into the task of encouraging the spread of education. As we have already seen, he announced that in the filling of official appointments, preference would be given, not to birth or position but to training in Government Schools. This still further alienated the landed gentry. Lord Hardinge also projected an elaborate railway and road system for improving the communications of the country, and laid a solid foundation for the work afterwards accomplished by Lord Dalhousie. The hurrying tide of Western progress proceeded in many other directions, while the Indian people saw with increasing dismay the submergence of their ancient institutions and familiar landmarks. Already the time seemed ripe for a reaction. But Lord Hardinge's own personal courtesy and consideration smoothed over many difficulties, and conciliated much opposition which might have proved dangerous to a less tactful personality. When he resigned in 1847 he was universally regretted by all classes of the community.

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## CHAPTER IV

### Progress and Reaction

By a singular chance the Governor-General concerning whose merits historians are universally agreed, was succeeded by a man, cast in a greater mould, whose character and achievements have given rise to great controversy. Lord Dalhousie, then only in his thirty-sixth year, succeeded Lord Hardinge at the beginning of 1848. In his youth, in his intellectual vigour, and in his all-pervading energy, he suggests at once to the historian a comparison with his later successor, Lord Curzon. Lord Dalhousie has been termed the maker of modern India, and his period of office is worthy of close study.

From its commencement, his rule was marked by great self-confidence. He never hesitated; and while willing to take advice from those competent to give it, always relied in the last resort on his own judgment. Almost as soon as he landed in the country, he was confronted with a delicate and difficult problem. The solution which Lord Hardinge had proposed for the affairs of the Punjab was beginning to reveal signs of weakness. The Central Government, so recently under the administration of Henry Lawrence, was efficient and well administered; but the outlying provinces shortly became turbulent. The Sikh military aristocracy cherished the belief that the late war had not represented a fair trial of strength. In fact, the Punjab in 1848 was still a powder magazine, waiting for a single spark to spring into destructive activity. Trouble shortly broke out from the direction of Multan. The retiring Dewan of the province attacked

and wounded two English officers who were accompanying the man designed to supersede him. Thanks to the energy and initiative of Herbert Edwardes, Dewan Mul Raj was defeated and driven within the walls of Multan. The Sikh army refused to march against Mul Raj; and the commencement of the hot weather rendered the movement of British troops difficult. Had the Government struck quickly, it is quite possible the outbreak might have been averted; but while there seemed any prospect of the Lahore Government reasserting its authority, there was still great reluctance to make use of British forces. Despite all the efforts of the English authorities to avert a struggle, matters came quickly to a head. The Sikh detachments despatched against Mul Raj deserted and joined him, the great Sirdars, with large contingents under their command, raised the Khalsa standard and even made an alliance with their hereditary foes, the Afghans, ceding Peshawar as the price of armed assistance. When war became inevitable, Lord

**Second  
Sikh War.**

Dalhousie acted with great vigour; and before Christmas, 1848, an army of 38,000 men was assembled in the Punjab. On January 10, 1849, the main bodies of the Sikh and English armies came into contact. The Sikhs were strongly posted at Chillianwala in a position where cavalry could not be employed with effect. Lord Gough was compelled to fight under somewhat disadvantageous circumstances. The British guns were not fully utilized, while the Sikh artillery, excellently served, inflicted heavy losses on the British. The day was won with the bayonet, principally by the English regiments, which bore the lion's share of the fighting, and hurled the Sikhs from their entrenchments after a desperate struggle. On the approach of night, they themselves withdrew and abandoned the ground they had won. The action was regarded as a technical victory, but it was costly and

fruitless. Lord Dalhousie wrote of it: 'We have gained a great victory, for we routed the enemy, committed a great slaughter on him, captured twelve of his guns, and remained masters of the field; but I repeat, another such would ruin us.' Lord Gough's conduct of the action caused great dissatisfaction; and Sir Charles Napier was hurried out from England to supersede him. But, on February 22, the old Commander-in-Chief regained his reputation by the conclusive triumph of Gujrat. Once more the fire of the British guns, now permitted to undertake proper artillery preparation, carried all before it. The infantry attack was not delivered until a terrible bombardment had destroyed the Sikh lines. The army of the Khalsa was put to flight; and a relentless pursuit made the battle completely decisive. The town of Multan had surrendered; a contingent of Dost Muhammad's Afghan forces was compelled to retreat. The Punjab now lay at the discretion of the British.

What was to be done with this great territory?

Punjab  
annexed. Lord Dalhousie, after careful consideration, decided that the only possible policy was annexation. The experience of the last ten years had shown the difficulty of erecting a strong Sikh Government; and in the recent rising, the infant administrative system had been largely destroyed. To allow the continuance of anarchy would merely extend an invitation to the Afghans to renew their invasions. Accordingly, the boy Maharaja was generously pensioned after resigning all claim to the sovereignty of the Punjab, and a proclamation was issued incorporating the territory as a province of British India. Lord Dalhousie wrote: 'While deeply sensible of the responsibilities I have assumed, I have an undoubting conviction of the expediency, the justice, and the necessity of my act; what I have done I have done with a clear conscience, and in the honest belief that it was imperatively

‘demanded of me by my duty to the State.’ The Governor-General would have preferred to place John Lawrence in sole charge of the new province ; for he did not approve of Sir Henry Lawrence’s policy of encouraging the Sikh Sirdars as against the peasantry. On the other hand, it was impossible to pass over Sir Henry, whose achievements in the Punjab under the former regime had been brilliant. Accordingly, Sir Henry Lawrence, John Lawrence, and Charles Mansell were appointed members of a Board of Commissioners. Sir Henry was detailed to supervise the disarming of the country, the Reorgani- conciliation of the Sikh Sirdars, and the zation. recruiting of a new Sikh regiment. John Lawrence undertook the settlement of land revenue ; while Mansell was concerned principally with organization of the judiciary. Within a few years the work of these men and of their brilliant subordinates completely changed the face of the Punjab. The province was disarmed and made peaceable ; its defence against Afghanistan was secured by a line of fortresses. A network of roads was constructed ; irrigation canals were projected and executed on a large scale. The land-tax - was reduced ; octroi duties abolished. The remarkable success of these measures, which together constituted one of the most brilliant achievements of British organizing capacity, was shown by the fact that the material prosperity of the people increased by leaps and bounds ; while within three years of the second Sikh War, Sikh regiments were proud to fight under the banner of the Company. For the work achieved, Lord Dalhousie is entitled to much credit. He supervised the policy in all its details ; and it was he who supported the cautious John Lawrence as against his more sentimental and impetuous brother. It was John who insisted on restoring, as a first step to better things, the financial stability of the province ; and it was John who made it the principal task of the new administration to safeguard

the interests of the peasantry. Sir Henry performed invaluable services in conciliating the aristocracy and obtaining their support for the new system. But his unmethodical habits and his romantic temperament seemed to Lord Dalhousie unsuited for the humdrum work of administrative reorganization. Sir John was therefore, removed in 1853 to Rajputana, where his sympathetic understanding of the outlook and prejudices of the Rajput nobility once more enabled him to win valuable support for the Company's rule. John Lawrence remained in the Punjab; the Board was abolished, and he became Chief Commissioner.

As a consequence of the second Sikh War, Lord Dalhousie had carried the frontiers of the Company's possessions up to the mountains of Afghanistan. The British were brought directly in contact with the frontier peoples.

Lord Dalhousie, careful to avoid the mistakes of his predecessors, took pains to secure the personal friendship of Dost Muhammad. Herbert Edwardes, at this time Commissioner of Peshawar, was in 1853 authorized by the Governor-General to negotiate a treaty with the King of Kabul. Dost Muhammad agreed to be a friend of the friends of the British and an enemy of their foes. Past disputes were to be forgotten by either party. The Amir was completely won over by the successful conclusion of an agreement in 1855; and the whole atmosphere of frontier relations was changed for the better.

While on the western border of India, the Company's possessions had thus received a considerable augmentation, the trend of affairs in the east soon resulted in acquisitions at least equally notable. The Burmese Government, untaught by the lesson of 1826, was still conducting itself in a barbarous and arbitrary manner, inflicting serious injury upon members of the British mercantile community, and refusing all redress. In 1851, the British merchants of

Alliance  
with  
Kabul.

Trouble  
with  
Burma.



Rangoon were stung by their grievances into submitting a memorial to Lord Dalhousie. A man-of-war was despatched to investigate the complaints of the British settlers. The Burmese authorities were arrogant; the naval officer tactless. To the dismay of Lord Dalhousie, hostilities broke out between the British vessel and the forts of Rangoon. The Governor-General, though vexed at the occurrence, quickly realized that it was impossible to maintain harmonious relations with the King of Burma. Having made up his mind, he determined to conclude the business before the weather became unsuitable for military operations. Overseeing every detail of equipment and transport, he launched an expedition which proved brilliantly successful. In April, 1852, Rangoon was occupied, and employed as a base of future operations in the cool season. The authorities in England were anxious that the Company should advance to Ava; but Lord Dalhousie, with an instinctive recognition of what the case demanded, contented himself with annexing the province of Pegu. The great Port of Rangoon thus passed finally under the control of the Company. The administration of the new province was highly successful; and before long its material prosperity was assured.

The quick decision and independence of judgment which the Governor-General displayed in dealing with the affairs of the Punjab and of Burma were equally noticeable when he was called upon to consider questions affecting other territories under non-British control. Being himself a profound believer in the blessings of Western civilization, he conceived that the most meritorious work which could be accomplished by any Governor-General was to sweep away those 'refuges of conservatism and bulwarks of reaction'; the Indian States. In Lord Dalhousie's views there was nothing to be said in their favour. He believed that they added immensely to the difficulties of administering British India; that their

**Dalhousie  
and the  
States.**

Governments were hopelessly inefficient; that they were anomalous survivals from a less civilized age. In 1848 he had written to the Court of Directors, 'I take occasion of recording my strong and deliberate opinion, that in the exercise of a wise and sound policy the British Government is bound not to put aside or to neglect such rightful opportunities of acquiring territory or revenue as may from time to time present themselves.' Now these 'opportunities' apart from such instances of involuntary aggression as led to the annexation of the

**The  
Doctrine  
of Lapse.**

Punjab, were principally to be discovered by taking advantage of the Hindu doctrine of succession. The principle had for long been recognized that in 'dependent' States or States which owed their existence to the British power, sovereignty 'lapsed' to the Supreme authority if natural heirs to the royal line were no longer available. This view conflicted radically with the Hindu doctrine of adoption, under which an adopted child, regardless of his actual origin, is recognized as possessing all the rights and duties of an heir by blood. In times past, when the ceremony of adoption was undertaken by a reigning family, the Company had never refused to recognize the heir, but had at the same time made it perfectly clear that such recognition was an act not of right but of grace. Lord Dalhousie refused to continue this plan, claiming that it was necessary to take advantage of every just opportunity for consolidating the territories which already belong to us, by taking possession of States which may lapse in the midst of them.' We must carefully remember, however, that Lord Dalhousie specifically excluded from this doctrine

**Its Limita-  
tions.**

all those princely houses whose sovereignty dated back before the Company's regime. He applied it to dependent States and to them alone. It is therefore, not true to say that all the territories ruled by Indian Princes were in danger of

being brought under the Company's control. But even so, the Governor-General's attitude was erroneous. He did not realize the historic position of the States, their functions as conservators of national tradition, and, more than all, their hold upon the esteem and affection of the people. As chance would have it no fewer than eight principalities, great and small, were quickly brought under British control by Lord Dalhousie's ruthless application of his theory. As a direct consequence, bitter feelings of resentment were aroused in many quarters—how bitter, men were not to learn until the year 1857 allowed those feelings full expression. Worse still, many ruling chiefs to whom the doctrine had not been applied, many even to whom it was not applicable at all, lived in continual apprehension lest at some future time their States should be brought within its operation. Between 1848 and 1854, the States of Satara, Jaitpur, Sambalpur, Baghat, Udaipur (Central India), Jhansi and Nagpur were annexed. Little wonder that with the spectacle of the perpetual aggrandizement of the Company before their eyes, the Princes of India became uneasy. Moreover, Lord Dalhousie's uncompromising mind was not content merely with the incorporation of the territories of foreign States. He swept away in addition certain titular sovereignties, such as that of the Nawab of the Carnatic, of the Raja of Tanjore, and of the Peshwa. He also attempted to arrange for the abolition of the titular Empire of Delhi; but in this respect he was overruled by the home authorities. The feelings aroused by these annexations were, however, weak in comparison with the resentment resulting from a far more serious step, the incorporation of Oudh in the Company's territories.

We have noticed on an earlier page the imperfections residing in Lord Hasting's plan of dealing with Indian States by a system of subordinate alliances. In no case

did these disadvantages assume such formidable proportions as in the territories of the Company's old and faithful ally, the King of Oudh. Successive Oudh rulers had found themselves without responsibility, entitled to invoke the aid of the British if rebellion raised its head. What incentive had they to exercise control over the administration of their dominions? It can, therefore, cause no surprise that they lapsed into self-indulgence and relegated the work of Government to unworthy favourites. From the time of Lord William Bentinck, the condition of Oudh had gone from bad to worse. Stern warnings were from time to time addressed to the rulers that if no amendment were made, the province would be taken over by the British. But nothing was done, no steps were taken to repress anarchy, and the country fell into complete disorder. To such a pitch had matters come that in 1847 Lord Hardinge had visited Lucknow in person to remonstrate with the King. If he had insisted upon the entertainment of British officials to reform the administration, much subsequent trouble might have been saved. As it was, the old King readily promised amendment, but did nothing. In Lord Dalhousie's time the condition of Oudh became worse, and as the tone of the new ruler was less conciliatory than that of his predecessor, Lord Dalhousie was no longer prepared to overlook the increasing disorders. The Governor-General commissioned Colonel Sleeman, now Resident in Lucknow, to report upon the internal condition of the country. The resulting report, which was endorsed by the statements of Outram, a man of very different personality, left Dalhousie in little doubt as to the necessity of drastic action. In May, 1855, he wrote, 'A very heavy though very interesting and important paper was lately come, being General Outram's report on the present state of Oudh.' He has brought together a tremendous bill of indictment against the Government

'of that ill-fated land. I do not think it can be allowed 'to stand.' In fact the case for taking Oudh under British control was clear and incontrovertible. There was, however, no reason why the kingdom should have been embodied in the Company's territories. It seems probable that a temporary management by European officers would have sufficed to restore order, and to impose restrictions upon the Talukdars who, from their fortified strongholds, were setting the King's officers at defiance and preying upon the hapless peasantry. Lord Dalhousie himself desired to take over the Government of the country ; but at the same time, to guarantee the royal title to the King with liberal allowances, and to allot to him a limited jurisdiction. But he was overruled

Annexa-  
tion.

by the home authorities, who determined on annexation. The Governor-General was unquestionably right and the home authorities wrong.

For in the first place the ancient ties of alliance between the Oudh dynasty and the British entitled the King to generous consideration ; and in the second place, annexation unquestionably involved the repudiation of solemn treaties. The Court of Oudh remained under the impression that the worst which could happen would be that the King would be relieved of responsibility ; that the Resident would administer through the local Indian officials ; and that the surplus revenue would remain in the treasury. Accordingly, when the King of Oudh was suddenly called upon to sign a treaty handing over the entire administration, a severe shock was caused not only to the Oudh Durbar but to all who retained a belief in British good faith. The King refused to sign the treaty, and the British Government forthwith assumed the administration of Oudh in February, 1856. The King and his dependents were pensioned off and conveyed to Calcutta.

In England this drastic step excited little remark. Influential periodicals had for some time been advocating

it; and there was a general impression that the annexation was thoroughly justified. In India, however, the case was very different. The spectacle of an old and trusted ally of the Company being suddenly swallowed up, still further excited the alarm of the Indian Princes. Even more serious was the fact that the ruin of the Court of Oudh had thrown thousands of soldiers out of employ, impoverished the local nobility, and alienated powerful landholders. Serious discontent began to make itself felt in Oudh, which was increased by the vigorous attempts to impose law and order, without regard for formidable vested interests, upon districts which had for long been a prey to anarchy. But the most deplorable consequence of the annexation was the resentment created in the hearts of numbers of sepoys in the Company's service. The kingdom had been one of the principal recruiting grounds of the Bengal army, providing the rank and file of many of the high-caste regiments. The circumstances accompanying the deposition of the King, and the embodiment of his territories in British India, excited much indignation among the Indian soldiery. Few people indeed were found in any quarter to support Lord Dalhousie's action. Influential servants of the Company considered that the annexation was nothing but *dacoity in excelsis*. Even those persons who had suffered most severely from the misgovernment of the Kings of Oudh could not understand the justice of summarily deposing so humble and loyal an ally as Wajid Ali.

We have already seen that Lord Dalhousie's political operations were calculated to offend influential sections of Indian society. In his domestic administration also, his love for Western institutions led him into perilous powers. Most of the authorities are now agreed that the steps he took were for the ultimate benefit of the country; but the rapidity with which

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innovations were introduced, together with the failure to estimate the strength of Indian conservatism, exhibit little regard for ordinary prudence.

Among the most important branches of his domestic activity was his zeal in promoting education. As we have already noticed, Government had begun to realize its responsibilities to the people of India in this direction; but up to the middle of the nineteenth century, no really comprehensive scheme of general education had been put forward. Numerous institutions had been established; and much thought was devoted to the problem of popularizing the study of Western subjects; but those who principally profited by the existing facilities were the wealthy members of traditionally learned classes. In 1854, Sir Charles Wood, then President of the Board of Control, addressed to the Governor-General in Council a despatch outlining a well-conceived system of public education. The object to be aimed at was defined as 'the diffusion of the improved arts, sciences, philosophy and literature of Europe, in short, of European knowledge.' Each province was to have a Department of Public Instruction; in each Presidency town there was to be a University. Provision was made for the establishment of training institutions; for the multiplication of vernacular schools; for the introduction of educational ladders leading from the vernacular to the high schools; and for the bestowal of grants-in-aid upon schools privately maintained. The system outlined suffered from the defects of all bureaucratic plans; it depended far too much upon State action and far too little either upon individual initiative, or upon indigenous ideas. Indeed, we may trace from Sir Charles Wood's despatch many of the disadvantages which are pointed out by modern critics of India's educational system. It is, however, only fair to remember that the ideas put forward in the despatch of 1854 represent the

**Educa-  
tional  
Advance.**

high water mark of contemporary educational thought in England. The system erected was undoubtedly imperfect; but its imperfections were not due to any lack of zeal on the part of its authors. They gave to India the best system which they could devise, and if that system proved subsequently to have faults, the responsibility must lie, not so much with Sir Charles Wood or Lord Dalhousie, as with their successors; who were content to allow the frame-work to become stereotyped and to remain largely uninfluenced by subsequent developments of educational theory in Europe.

Thus encouraged by the home authorities Lord Dalhousie threw his great energies into the task of spreading education. Unfortunately by so doing he not only offended the vested interests of the learned classes; but encouraged the belief that Government was meditating an organized attack upon the Hindu religion. It is indeed typical of the uneasiness of India between 1850 and 1857 that a performance so benevolent in intention as Lord Dalhousie's educational measures should have excited such serious political unrest. An acute and able contemporary observer notes, 'I believe the native Hindu mind to have been for some time previously alarmed on the subject of caste and religion. Many public measures had tended to this result; but perhaps none more than the extreme rapidity with which educational measures had of late years been forced on. Local officers, with the approval of Government, solicited contributions from the people for the establishment of schools. These were set up not only in cities, nor set only in towns; but villages were grouped together into circles or unions to support a school, and every month brought out some new measure to give impetus to the educational mania. All public servants were required to qualify themselves by literary acquirements for which examinations were instituted. Not

Political  
Conse-  
quences.



'even an ordinary messenger on the pay of eight shillings a month could be entertained unless he could read and write. Village accountants and the headman of village communities might be required to pass examinations. . . . The people looked on and wondered not without suspicion. Why were we doing all this? Surely not without some hidden purpose of our own. It was whispered, and extensively believed, that the object of our Government was to destroy the Hindu religion, and to convert them to our own.'

Nor were the measures of social reform, promulgated in the time of Lord Dalhousie, calculated to ally the suspicions aroused in so many quarters. In former times a Hindu converted to Christianity lost all share in his family property. Now, however, by a special enactment the convert retained all his rights and privileges, while being released from the accompanying duties which distinguished the tenure of property in a Hindu joint family. Perhaps still more alarming, from the point of view of orthodox opinion, was the enactment which sanctioned the re-marriage of Hindu widows. Such measures as these were taken to prove that the Government was definitely hostile to Hindu customs; and that the institutions of Hinduism were shortly to be subverted more or less completely.

In other directions also, Lord Dalhousie's reforms excited alarm and wonder. The new Public Works Department, which he instituted commenced operations on every side. Roads were improved, canals cut. A uniform postal system was set up. More startling still, in 1853 the telegraph system of India was inaugurated; and during the next few years, communications by wire were established between the capital and most of the important military stations. A beginning was made with the railway construction; and by 1856, there were two hundred miles of line open for traffic. These two appli-

**Social  
Reform.**

**Material  
Innova-  
tions.**

cations of Western science excited deep interest among all classes of the population. The trains in particular were crowded with passengers; and inevitably, considerations of caste were momentarily forgotten in the excitement of the new form of transit. The orthodox found fresh grounds for offence; regarding the railway as one more subtle device for attacking the sanctity of Hinduism. Unfortunately, this suspicion found confirmation in the action of certain missionaries, who announced their conviction that railways and steamships would facilitate the material union of the different peoples in India and pave the way for their inclusion in the fold of Christianity.

Lord Dalhousie was animated in all these reforms by a sincere desire to benefit the people; and the alarm and indignation which many of his actions excited, though formidable enough, were the result principally of misunderstanding. The Governor-General was extremely anxious for the political as well as for the material and social progress of the country. He took the opportunity of the renewal of the Company's Charter in 1853 to press upon the home authorities the desirability of instituting an embryo Parliament in India. We have already noticed that in 1833 the Executive Council of the Governor-General received the addition, for Legislative purposes, of a Legal Member. But at the same time, the Governors of Madras and Bombay had been deprived of the law-making power which they had up till then enjoyed. The system did not work well; and Lord Dalhousie desired to avail himself of the local knowledge of officials in other Presidencies besides Bengal. Accordingly, six special members were added to the Governor-General's Council for the purpose of legislation. By this means, each province of India was represented. Writing in July, 1854, Lord Dalhousie remarked, 'Our Young Parliament is going on smoothly. It has given

'me a great deal of trouble to bring it into the world, 'and its sittings break up one day in the week for me, 'which is a serious affair; but it is a vastly superior 'machine to the last and will do a great deal of business.' The Indian legislature thus constituted was, of course, very small, and quite unrepresentative of the Indian point of view. But it stood for a real beginning; and Lord Dalhousie is entitled to the credit of laying the foundations of Parliamentary Institutions in India.

The Governor-General, though he persisted in his reforming measure with courage and conviction, was not blind to the disturbed state of Indian opinion. The condition of the army in India caused him considerable anxiety; for he thought that the proportion of European to Indian troops was far too low and the discipline of the forces unsatisfactory. He was seriously alarmed by the outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854. Exaggerated reports of British reverses were sedulously circulated in India; and to make matters worse, the Home authorities, despite the Governor-General's protests, insisted on recalling two regiments of British troops which had been lent to the Company. Lord Dalhousie warned them that any withdrawal of troops by the Government would be an act of reckless folly, but his opinion was ignored. When he left India in February, 1856, broken down by ill-health and overwork, he was seriously apprehensive of grave trouble.

His work for India had been great: and his influence was largely responsible for the changes introduced into the governmental system when the Company's Charter came up for renewal in 1853. The Company was allowed to retain its power 'until Parliament shall otherwise provide': but the Court of Directors was reduced to a shadow, its patronage abolished, and the civil and military services of the Company thrown open to competitive examination.

Danger  
from the  
Army.

Dalhousie  
retires.

The tendency towards unveiled ministerial control was obvious.

When Lord Canning, who had been appointed to succeed Lord Dalhousie, assumed charge of his office, the condition of India appeared outwardly tranquil. There were many signs of peace and prosperity: and without the imposition of additional burdens upon the tax-payers, the revenue was adequate for the calls made upon it. But contemporary observers did not fail to note certain indications of restlessness on the part of many sections of Indian opinion. They failed, however, to understand that this uneasiness was the direct consequence of the policy, enthusiastically followed by British administrators for the last half a century, of filling the old bottles of India

with the new wine of the West. It was not perceived that the widespread feeling of insecurity and uneasiness pervading so many sections of Indian opinion was an inevitable product of the zealous efforts of the British to secure the sudden Westernization of India. Hence, while the more statesmanlike of contemporaries recognized the danger that a sudden outbreak of trouble either at home or abroad might set the country in a blaze, they had no clear idea either of the imminence of the peril or of the measures which might have obviated it. Lord Dalhousie had particularly insisted that it was impossible to hold forth an assurance of continued peace in India. Lord Canning also began his period of office in no spirit of rash self-confidence. At the same time, no Englishman seemed to have any adequate perception of the degree of danger to which British rule in India was shortly to be exposed.

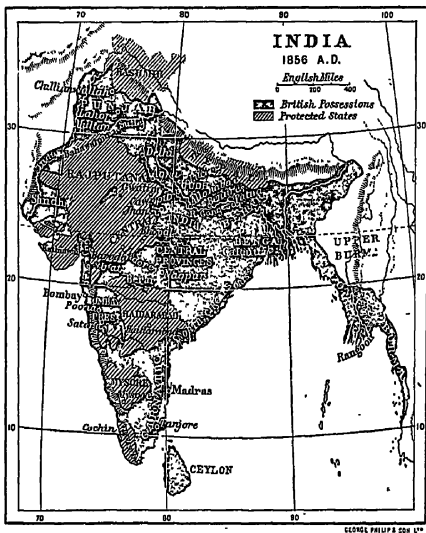
The first question with which the new Governor-General was called upon to deal arose out of foreign affairs. We have already noticed that in times past the Court of Persia had desired to acquire the Afghan City of Herat.

Trouble  
with  
Persia.

A Spirit  
of uneasi-  
ness.

Lord  
Canning.

In 1852, the Shah of Persia planned another expedition against the fortress, but was persuaded to desist by the efforts of the British Envoy at Teheran. With the outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854, the Shah conceived that his hands were strengthened; and in 1856 Herat was occupied by Persian troops. War thereupon broke out between Persia and Great Britain. A British



*Longmans, Green & Co., London, New York, Epsbury & Co., Calcutta*

expeditionary force under the leadership of Outram and Havelock undertook a short campaign in January, 1857. The Shah shortly gave way on every point, and agreed to abstain from interference in Afghanistan. But the results of the episode were important; for the Amir Dost Muhammad, who, as we have seen, had

concluded a treaty with the British in 1855, became more anxious than ever for cordial relations. Accordingly, in January, 1857, it was agreed that the Amir should be supplied with arms and money, and that he

**Strengthened Relations with Kabul.**

should allow a British Mission to enter Afghanistan. The old Amir was delighted. 'I have made an alliance with the British Government,' he is reported to have said, 'and come what may I will keep it till death.'

The Amir's attitude was destined to be of considerable importance before the year was out; for his loyal observance of this engagement freed the British from anxiety regarding the North-Western Frontier when the revolt of 1857 plunged the administration of Northern India into momentary confusion.

For those who have followed the events briefly outlined on previous pages of this history, no lengthy explanation of the causes of the outbreak of 1857 will be required. It has

**Causes of the Mutiny.**

already been pointed out that an enthusiastic attempt to force progressive Western institutions upon a Conservative eastern society fostered an atmosphere of irritation and uneasiness. We have seen how recent events combined to inspire various influential classes with an active dislike of British rule; how familiar intercourse and the spectacle of occasional reverses to the British arms had gradually destroyed the belief, at one time widely held, that the 'destiny' of the Company was irresistible. With the operation of time, it is probable that the feeling of unrest might have died down; for the people at large would have realized, before long, that the British were attempting, however clumsily, to confer real advantages upon the country. That which actually brought the problem to a head and removed all chance of avoiding bloodshed was the existence of a body of men who not only shared in the feelings of impatience of British rule which characterized

so large a number of their own countrymen, but possessed in addition the power of giving those feelings a terrible expression.

We have had occasion to notice from time to time in the course of the preceding fifty years certain outbreaks of mutiny and disaffection in the ranks of the Bengal Army. The sepoys had definite grievances of their own, connected with technical questions of service, which reinforced the feeling of discontent they suffered in common with other Indians. The triumphs of the Company's army had excited the vanity of the Indian regiments, who were convinced that no force could resist them. But they might not have taken action as they did, had they not been exasperated into murderous activity by the belief that the Government was putting the finishing touch to an organized attack upon caste by issuing cartridges greased with animal fat. It was believed at the time, and has been repeated since, that the mutiny was in a large degree the result of the issue of greased cartridges. But from our own survey of the situation, it appears obvious that the issue of the cartridges would have had little effect, had the incident not appeared to the sepoy as the culmination of a policy directed against religion and caste. The passing of the General Service Enlistment Act, by which no recruit was in future to be accepted unless he would undertake to march wherever he might be ordered—overseas if necessary—seemed to confirm the sepoy's suspicions. Even so the outbreak of 1857 might have been avoided, had it not been for the carelessness of the authorities. As a contemporary wrote, 'All the causes, however, which have been enumerated, might have been in operation, and yet would have failed to produce the mutiny, but for the capital error which was committed of denuding our provinces of European troops. Religious alarm might have been excited; the native soldiers might have been

at the same time discontented and insubordinate; the Talukdars of Oudh and the Royal families of Delhi and Lucknow might have plotted; yet, if we had possessed a few English regiments in the country, discontent would never have matured into a rebellion.'

The accuracy of this analysis is generally confirmed by the fact that in Bengal itself, where there were more European regiments than up-country, comparatively little trouble was experienced; while in the armies of Madras and Bombay, where the sepoys had precisely the same grievances, but where the disproportion between European and Indian troops was not so great, there was practically no disaffection.

Material circumstances thus favouring the insubordinate spirit of the sepoys, there were not wanting those who fanned their religious passions to a flame. During the first four months of 1857 itinerant preachers wandered between Delhi and Calcutta spreading rumours concerning the greased cartridges. At the back of the movement, skilfully utilizing the growing popular excitement for their own advantages may be discerned three persons. One was the principal Queen of Delhi, who was exasperated by the recent decision that the titular empire should cease on the death of Bahadur Shah, its present holder, instead of descending to her own son; one was the queen mother of Oudh who had in vain attempted by representations in England to secure the reversal of the annexation; and the other was Nana Sahib, the adopted son of the late Peshwa, who had failed to establish a claim to the continuance of the personal pension granted to Baji Rao. Each of these persons dreamed of reviving the faded glories of a great dynasty; but it should carefully be noticed that their dreams were mutually exclusive. As might have been expected from the character of the uneasiness pervading India at the time the organizing intellects of the rising

Signs of  
the Storm.



in 1857 were largely Hindu ; though this fact has been obscured by the prominent part played by such great Muhammadan centres as Delhi and Lucknow.

The authorities did their best to allay excitement.

**Efforts  
of the  
Authori-  
ties.**

They withdrew the abnoxious cartridges ; and took every step which suggested itself in order to conciliate the troops. But matters had gone too far. The majority of the Indian

officers were thoroughly dissatisfied with the system which had supplied them with no career worthy of the name. These veterans of thirty years, whose pay was inferior to that of the most recently commissioned British subaltern, were in no mood to strike a blow for their foreign masters. As a rule, the Indian Officers were not actively hostile ; but made little effort to control their mutinous men. The British officers, many of whom were worn out and inefficient, trusting their troops with the blind obstinacy of old age, took no heed of the gathering storm and failed to disarm the regiments under their command. When open insurrection, accompanied by pillage and massacre, broke out in May, the military authorities were paralysed with surprise ; and by sheer indecision allowed the spirit of mutiny to

**Hesitation  
and  
Disaster.**

spread from regiment to regiment and from district to district. Prompt action might have confined the outbreak within very narrow limits ; had the mutinous regiments which

marched from Meerut to Delhi been overtaken and dispersed, the crisis might have been averted. But the incompetence of the Meerut command suffered the fire quickly to spread, with the result that the whole administrative system of the provinces of Agra and Oudh collapsed.

The mass of the population looked on apathetically in the early summer of 1857, displaying little

**Attitude  
of the  
People.**

hostility towards the foreigners who had ruled them so long. In most cases, they took their cue from the local magnate, remaining passive

when he refused to throw in his lot with the insurgents ; flocking to his banner when he decided to take active steps to exterminate the British. Considering the way in which the old landed families had suffered, whether justly or unjustly, as a result of the recent land settlements, it is perhaps, surprising that so many were content to adopt an attitude of passive loyalty. Further, large numbers of helpless refugees owed their lives to the chivalrous kindness of Prince or peasant. Even so, there was a general reign of terror in certain localities. Three distinct centres of disaffection may be detected ; Agra and Oudh ; the territory round Delhi ; and portions of Central India. Of these, the first two were by far the most significant. The surviving British population took refuge in the fortifications of Allahabad, Cawnpore, Lucknow and Agra. Delhi, on the other hand, where there were no British troops at all, was seized by the mutineers, who made the unfortunate old Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah their puppet king. Cawnpore shortly surrendered to the forces which had rallied round Nana Sahib ; and notwithstanding the promise of a safe conduct to Allahabad, the garrison, with many unfortunate English women and children, were massacred under peculiarly horrible circumstances. Here, as elsewhere, the mass of mutineers seem to have been egged on by a small minority of thoroughly disaffected persons. As a contemporary Indian observer remarked, 'One knave led astray nine fools and then told them they had gone too far to draw back.' But before long the first shock was over. John Lawrence, warned in good time by telegraph, held the Punjab firm and detached a body of troops to threaten Delhi.

It is probably true to say that the Sepoy Mutiny would have assumed a far less serious aspect had Government acted more promptly. The Governor-General was not the man to deal successfully with a menace of this kind.

Lord  
Canning's  
Character.

Mainly from his constitutional dislike of coming to a decision until every scrap of evidence had been weighed and classified, Lord Canning failed to act with necessary promptitude. His calm and reflective personality, which was to prove so invaluable after the suppression of the outbreak, certainly contributed to the duration of the fighting. It was remarked that when he should have struck the guilty, he wasted precious moments in taking elaborate precautions against striking the innocent. But while his policy allowed the insurrectionary movement to spread, the advantages derived from his high moral attitude must not be forgotten.

For some weeks after the origin of the outbreak, unpleasant incidents multiplied. There was a small insurrection among the Muhammadans of Berar; and Central India fell away from the British. The troops which Scindia had despatched from Gwalior to the assistance of Government joined the insurgents; the Rani of Jhansi, one of the sufferers by the 'Doctrine of Lapse,' slaughtered all the Europeans she could find and raised the standard of revolt. On the other hand, the Maharaja Holkar remained loyal; the Maharaja of Patiala threw his great influence unreservedly in support of the British; and the Indian Princes in general did not waver in their fidelity. It is a testimony to the ability and clear-sightedness of many Indian statesmen that in the majority of cases the Durbars refused to have any dealings with the insurrectionary movement. Such Ministers as Salar Jang in Hyderabad and Dinkar Rao in Gwalior steadfastly resisted the frantic efforts of the disaffected sections to win over the support of the States.

Before many months had passed, it was perfectly plain that the Indian Princes had calculated correctly. Little by little the insurrection was mastered. Probably no power which had held India during the past could have withstood

**Progress  
of the  
Movement.**

**Effects  
of Sea-  
Power.**

such a shock; but on the other hand no power which held India in the past had rested upon a foundation so wide and so stable. Great Britain's command of the sea shortly began to produce its irresistible effect. Contingents of troops intended for service in China were immediately diverted to India; the Persian expeditionary force was speedily made available; more and more soldiers were poured by thousands into the country. The garrison of Lucknow, after a strenuous resistance, was reinforced by the heroic Havelock and subsequently brought into safety by Sir Colin Campbell; Oudh was then reduced to order. Delhi had been captured in September, 1857, after hard fighting; and by this event the mutineers lost their rallying point. Bahadur Shah was deposed and exiled, and the House of Timur came to an end. Sir Hugh Rose's brilliant campaign in Central India paralyzed the insurrection in that quarter; and by the beginning of 1859 order had been restored throughout the disaffected regions. Sea-power had once again, in its effortless fashion, secured the mastery of India for Great Britain.

The sensation caused not merely in Great Britain, but also in Europe and America, by the outbreak of the mutiny was startling. When details of the sufferings endured by inoffensive Europeans became known, there was a universal demand for sanguinary revenge upon the mutineers. Public opinion was prepared to sanction any measures, however terrible, and to condone the infliction of any punishment, however severe. Under these circumstances there was the greatest danger lest racial feeling should increase to such an extent as to render any Government of India, save by the sword, an impossibility for many years. When a man like Marshman, by inclination and profession alike a firm friend of India, could write, 'In the annals of human guilt there is no blacker page than that in which the perfidious

Contemporary  
Feelings  
on the  
Mutiny.

murders of Cawnpore are inscribed,' it may be imagined to what extent less moderate minds were prepared to go. In the early days of the restoration of order, the British troops, inflamed to fury by the atrocities committed upon women and children, did not take sufficient care to discriminate between the innocent and the guilty; and bloody reprisals of the most lamentable kind were inflicted upon helpless people. But the attitude of the authorities, and particularly of the Governor-General, was never in doubt. Lord

**Canning's Wisdom.** Canning firmly refused to permit his countrymen to indulge in the passion of revenge.

Even at the end of the year 1857, he was able to write :  
 ' I will not govern in anger. Justice, and that as stern, as inflexible, as law and might can make it, I will deal out. But I will never allow an angry and indiscriminate act or word to proceed from the Government so long as I am responsible for it. . . . Whilst we are prepared, as the first duty of all, to strike down resistance without mercy whenever it shows itself; we acknowledge that, resistance over, deliberate justice and calm patient reason are to resume their sway; that we are not going either in anger or from indolence, to punish wholesale; whether by wholesale hangings and burnings, or by the less violent but not one whit less offensive course of refusing trust and countenance and favour and honour to any man because he is of a class or a creed.' The course of mercy and moderation which won for the Governor-General the nickname at first derisory but afterwards honourable, of 'Clemency Canning,' did much to hasten the restoration of order. Had it not been for his restraining influence, the reprisals of the British would assuredly have created a bitter feeling persisting far into the future.

But the consequences of the outbreak were none the less profound. The year 1857 marks the close of a definite epoch in the relations between Britain and India.

Never again would English administrators press forward with their schemes for the benefit of the country in the same spirit of admirable, if headstrong, zeal, careless of all but the cause of humanity, recking nothing of the cold and less generous considerations of policy and statecraft. The lesson of the mutiny was to remain from henceforth unchallenged; the lesson that the most benevolent intentions and the most disinterested of motives afford neither security against the perpetration of mistakes nor indemnity against their lamentable consequences. In general, it must be said that the British, impressed less with the ease with which the mutiny was crushed, than with the distressing nature of the resultant disturbances, began to think far more of the difficulties to which their position in India was exposed, than had hitherto been the case. For while the mutiny demonstrated, from the military point of view, the overwhelming might of Great Britain, it also revealed the existence of hitherto unsuspected potentialities both for disorders and for racial hatred in Indian society. This revelation caused the British to regard Indian aspirations with an eye that was more watchful and less benevolent than had previously been the case. The immediate consequence of the mutiny, as always occurs when the materially weaker of two parties resorts to violence, was to produce temporary embitterment of relations and a temporary setback to the even progress of development. As a recent writer remarks, 'The profound change of tone and altered standpoint which have marked the policy of the Government of India since the mutiny, could hardly be more strikingly illustrated than by a comparison of the instructions addressed to Sir James Outram on February 4, 1856, with those issued to Sir Robert Montgomery on October 6, 1858. . . . The object of Lord Dalhousie's Government was to benefit the masses, with a lofty disregard of the impression

' which, by doing so, they might produce upon the native  
' aristocracy. And to this end they put themselves into  
' direct contact with the people "with on miscrowned  
' man's head " between them. They were resolved in  
' short that everybody should count as once and nobody  
' as more than one. When we turn to Lord Canning's  
' instructions of October 6, everything is changed.  
' Not the good of masses, but as a writer in the *Calcutta*  
' *Review* of September, 1860, approvingly puts it, "To  
' hold the eastern Empire with the least strain on the  
' population and finances of Great Britain, is the problem  
' of Indian Government," Popular welfare has retired  
' into the background and its place is taken by the urgent  
' necessity of pacifying the country.'<sup>1</sup>

On a large review it would seem apparent that the  
consequences of the outbreak of 1857 were  
in certain directions disastrous. A river of  
A Disas- blood separated the two races, at any rate in  
trous heritage. Northern India ; and its bridging was to be a  
matter of some difficulty. It must be pronounced as  
most regrettable that circumstances should have enabled  
the intrigues of a small number of thoroughly selfish  
and worthless persons to produce consequences so  
profound. The gulf which divided the British adminis-  
trators from the Indian people prior to 1857 was largely  
one of misunderstanding. There had been times when  
the policy of the Company in regard to its Indian  
subjects was utterly indefensible ; but for half a century  
such a policy had been discredited ; and the Government,  
though it made mistakes, -was now animated by an  
unflinching desire to foster the welfare of the people.  
That the enthusiasm with which such a desire was  
translated into action, should of itself have produced a  
spirit which played into the hands of despotic tyrants,  
anxious only to regain the arbitrary power which had

<sup>1</sup> Irwin, *Garden of India*, pp. 191-2.

they ever abused and had morally forfeited, must be counted one of the tragedies of modern history. It would, however, be a mistake to imagine that the consequences of the outbreak of 1857 were entirely sinister. The flame of mutiny, if it caused benevolence to wither, destroyed many anomalies both traditional and institutional; and thus prepared the way for a healthier and more spontaneous development along the lines of material and political progress. (The

**Good from Evil.** weakest point of British administration in the

first half of the nineteenth century was the habit into which it had fallen of doing everything for the people, without inviting either their co-operation or their approval. Such a habit of mind, while it led unquestionably to ostensible advance, did not make either for strength or for solidity. After 1857 the pace slowed down. Indeed, the initiative of progress passed by degrees out of the hands of the British; and was taken up in an increasing degree by the educated middle classes of India. Before the mutiny it was the British administration which had pressed ahead recklessly; the retarding force was applied by the conservatism of the Indian population! After 1857 the position became by slow degrees reversed. The demand for progress arose not from Government but from the people; Government appeared more and more as the retarding and conservative element. This change, which is by far the most significant consequence of the sepoy rebellion, is gradually more manifest as the nineteenth century draws to a close. Its importance is still not generally recognized.

**End of the Company.** The obvious changes caused by the events of 1857 were sufficiently startling to engross the attention of contemporaries. The first thing to be swept away was the fiction of rule by the Company. A Committee of the House of Commons resolved that the time had come to transfer the Government of India in name as well as in fact to the Crown;



and a Bill introduced to give effect to this resolution received the Royal assent in August, 1858. The Directors vanished; the President of the Board of Control became the Secretary of State for India with an Advisory Council; the mastery of Parliament over Indian affairs was freed from all disguise.

But by a most unfortunate turn of events this mastery was in the future to be exerted far less frequently than had hitherto been the case. Prior to 1858 the affairs of the East India Company had been a matter of active concern to Parliament. The necessity of taking these affairs into frequent consideration, as the Charter of the Company came up for renewal time after time, led to the formation of Parliamentary Committees whose members gradually acquired great capacity for dealing with Indian problems. But when India took her place among the Crown territories, the occasion for this watchful supervision was no longer found. While the attention of Parliament was every whit as necessary after as before 1858, it tended to become more and more perfunctory since the call for decisive action after definite periods did not come. The main lines of British administration having been laid down, Parliament became content to leave matters there. In consequence, between 1858 and 1918 there were no examples of those old Committees on Indian affairs which had been of such admirable service from the time of Lord North onwards. It is this fact which lies at the root of many of the complaints formulated against British policy in India during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Great Britain apathetically allowed Indian destinies to be controlled by able administrators, whose outlook was as a rule restricted to their own time and circumstances. In consequence no clear-cut policy of far-reaching significance both for the present and for the future was formulated to guide the relations between the two.

An Un-  
expected  
Result.

countries. Not until the year 1918, when the declaration of such a policy could no longer be postponed, did English statesmen turn their attention seriously to the problems of India. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that if Parliamentary control over India had been exercised as freely and as effectively after 1858 as before that date, the development of the country towards responsible government would have proceeded with far less friction than has actually been the case. This consequence of the disappearance of the Company, of course, lay hid in the future, and its importance was not guessed by contemporary critics, occupied as they were by the more obvious, because more immediate, effects of the change.

Most striking of all, from the political point of view, was the assumption of sovereignty over India by Queen Victoria, announced in her famous proclamation. The solemn declaration by Her Majesty that she held herself bound to the natives of her Indian territories by the same obligation of duty which bound her to her other subjects; that she would respect the rights, dignity and honour of the Indian Princes as her own; that she would tolerate no interference with the religious beliefs of India; that due regard should be paid to the ancient rights, usages and customs, produced a profound impression. This proclamation went far to destroy the feeling of impersonality which had hitherto prevented the Company's rule from appealing to the loyalty of its subjects; and it provided all classes of society with the spectacle of a monarch, a concrete and personal embodiment of royal authority, to whom allegiance was due.

The assumption by the Crown of rule over India was accompanied by a number of important legislative changes. The Indian Councils Act of 1861 deserves to be remembered as marking a stage in the development of the

Legisla-  
tive  
Changes.

modern Indian Legislatures. The system inaugurated by Lord Dalhousie, although more successful than its predecessor, suffered from great defects, which were now to a large extent removed. In order to relieve the congestion of business, legislative power was restored to the Councils of Bombay and Madras, and provision was made for the establishment of new legislatures in other provinces. At the same time, uniformity was secured by requiring the previous sanction of the Governor-General for certain types of legislation, and his subsequent consent to all Acts passed by the local Councils. Very important also was the definite admission of Indians to the Central legislature. The Legislative Council of the Governor-General was now reinforced with additional Members —not less than six and not more than twelve, of whom at least half were to be non-officials.

Constitutional Beginnings.

At the time of its passage, this provision represented a very real and liberal advance. The number of Indians at that time qualified to participate in the deliberations of a legislature run upon Western lines was extremely small; and the first Indian Members were great territorial magnates, or experienced officials of high rank. But the spectacle of their fellow-countrymen participating in the work of legislation, acted as a great stimulus to the ambitions of the small but growing class of middle class Indians educated along Western lines; and so soon as this class became considerable in numbers and in authority, the demand for constitutional progress became inevitable. The policy of admitting Indians to high official position was equally noticeable in connection with the Acts passed in 1861 for the remodelling of the judicial system. The old Supreme Court and Sadar Court of the Company were replaced by chartered High Courts. The law administered by these Courts was, about this time, placed upon a clearer and more satisfactory basis by the publication of the

Indian Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code, upon which experts had been working for many years. At the same time, the ability of Indian lawyers received formal recognition. Of the new judges, one-third were to be Barristers from England, one-third members of the Civil Service and the remainder might be selected from the ranks of Indian lawyers. The admission of Indians to the Bench in the new Courts, and to membership of the new Councils marks their first real participation in the highest grades of office. Another important change resulting from the legislation of 1861 was the separation of departments in the Governor-General's Executive Council by means of the portfolio system. From this time forward, the various Members dealt on their own initiative with all but the most critical matters.

For the remainder of his term of office Lord Canning was occupied with the difficult and delicate task of removing traces of the late disorders and of healing, so far as possible, the wounded feelings of all parties. His first care was the bestowal of the Sovereign's favours upon the Princes and Chiefs who had rendered distinguished services to Government. The manner in which the Indian Princes had thrown their great influence upon the side of law and order during the recent disturbances caused a profound change in the policy of the Government of India towards them. It has been well remarked that this policy falls into three well defined periods. In the early days of British rule, the tendency of the Company was to refrain absolutely from any interference with the territories of the Indian Princes ; to mark them off, as it were, by a ring-fence, and to turn a deaf ear to pleas for protection. In the time of Wellesley and Hastings, this policy gave way to the plan of subsidiary alliances, the operation of which in practice weakened the position of the ruling houses and led to troubles of

many kinds. From the year 1858 onwards, a new policy was adopted which may be described by the term of subordinate alliance and co-operation. The Princes were encouraged to feel that they occupied a position of peculiar honour under the British Crown; and they were invited to work with Government in securing the benefits of peace and good order to India at large. The doctrine of lapse was formally abandoned, and the right of ruling Chiefs to transmit their thrones as well as their personal possessions to adopted sons was acknowledged. The change resulting from the Proclamation of 1858 was rendered definitive by the Act of 1876, by which the Queen of England became Empress of India. Each ruling prince now became conscious of a personal relation with the British sovereign, which was greatly strengthened by the visits paid to India by members of the Royal Family in 1869, 1875-76 and subsequent years, culminating in 1911 when Their Majesties came in person to receive the homage of the country. Thus a new era was inaugurated in the relations between the Government of India and the feudatory rulers; confidence and mutual esteem taking the place of jealousy and suspicion. For while the British reserved their right to make the rulers personally responsible in the case of gross maladministration, the Princes on their part knew that Government would support, not discountenance, honest efforts to discharge responsibilities. The altered policy of Government in relation to the Indian Princes was extended in a great degree to the land-holding class in general. A real effort was made to conciliate the territorial magnates who, as we have already seen, had in certain cases fared hardly at the hands of the British Settlement Officers. The Talukdars of Oudh, who as a class had taken a prominent part in the late disturbances, were, after some indecision, treated with consideration; for it was generally felt that they had peculiar claims to indulgence.

But while the Indian Princes and land holders thus became conscious of a changed attitude on the part of the authorities, Government was in no sense willing to abandon its efforts on behalf of the peasantry. In 1859 a Rent Act was passed for Bengal, Bihar and Agra, the object of which was to protect the tenantry from arbitrary evacuation. Unfortunately, the framers of the measure were not sufficiently familiar with the conditions amidst which it was to operate; and although some relief was given to those whom it was designed to benefit, the unfamiliarity of the standards which it laid down led to a great mass of litigation. Two years after the passage of the Act, a greivous misfortune fell upon Agra, the Punjab, Rajputana and Cutch. Partly as a result of the late disturbances, famine broke out in these areas. Government displayed great activity in organizing relief; but its hands were tied by the disorganization of the administrative system, as well as by financial stringency. The arrangements were on the whole good; and although the mortality was considerable, the responsibility of Government for straining every nerve to relieve the effects of such a natural catastrophe was now honestly recognized.

The various reforms and reorganizations which marked the closing years of Lord Canning's Viceroyalty were expensive; and the mutiny had been more expensive still. The financial situation became extremely disquieting, for a large deficit existed. An English expert, James Wilson, was sent out to reorganize the financial administration. He died before he had seen the results of his labours; but he succeeded in laying the foundations of an excellent system. He established an import tariff of 10 per cent; he worked out a plan for paper currency; and he suggested far-reaching economies both on the civil and on the military side. Wilson and his successor,

Laing, by dint of their ability and skill, succeeded by the year 1862 in achieving financial equilibrium. Among the greatest difficulties which had to be encountered was the inherent dislike of all classes of Indians to the principle of direct taxation. Indian opinion persisted in looking upon such imposts as a punishment for the mutiny; and in the next few years a number of ingenuous petitions were put forward, imploring the Government to fine the people once and for all instead of penalizing them in perpetuity. The care which had to be taken to safeguard Indian susceptibilities greatly complicated the reformed financial arrangements. But the greatest weakness of the new system was its failure to devise a satisfactory convention between the central and provincial governments. The activities of the latter were continually expanding; but they had practically no control over their own revenues, being dependent upon grants made by the Central Government. In consequence, the provinces eagerly competed among themselves for the funds necessitated by rapid administrative expansion; and, since any grants remaining unexpended lapsed to the Central Government, they had no motive for practising economy. Not until Lord Mayo's time was this fruitful source of waste seriously attacked.

The reform of the army also demanded considerable attention. During the disturbed years of the mutiny, the Bengal army had almost disappeared. Complete reorganization was, therefore, necessary. Further the disappearance of the Company's rule brought to the front the question as to what was to be done with the Company's European regiments. The home authorities decided to amalgamate this force with the Queen's troops; and although a considerable proportion of the European soldiers exercised their option of refusing to serve under the new conditions, the policy of amalgamation was justified by

Army  
Reform.

its success. Warned by the experience of the mutiny, the authorities reduced the strength of the military forces in India, and also laid down definite proportions between European and Indian soldiers in each of the three Presidency armies. The British Officers of the Indian regiments were organized into three Staff Corps for the forces of the three Presidencies. This plan was abandoned at a later date in favour of the present system of a united Indian army.

It must be counted to the credit of British statesmen that the mutiny was not suffered to deflect in any way the course of educational progress. We have already noticed the enthusiasm with which Lord Dalhousie had adopted the measures outlined in the Wood despatch of 1854. In the very year, 1857, the three Universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras had been founded. To these were later added the Universities of Lahore and Allahabad. The model adopted was unfortunate, for the constitution of these Universities was based upon that of the University of London, and while the parent University was afterwards reformed in many directions, its children continued along the original lines far too long. We shall have to notice at a later date the defects of the Indian University system. But despite these defects it is impossible to deny that the establishment of the Universities represented an advance of quite extraordinary importance. They acted as a powerful stimulus to the acquisition of knowledge; they brought Indian thought into close contact with the thought of the West, to the benefit of all concerned. They enabled Indians, who could not proceed to Europe for courses of study, to acquire within the boundaries of their own country familiarity with the best European literature and science. They encouraged India once more to emerge from her isolation, and to make her own peculiar contribution to the ethical and philosophical heritage of the world. In



short, among the forces which have shaped India of to-day, the Universities founded on a modest scale in Lord Canning's term of office must be counted as being the most considerable.

In March, 1862, Lord Canning laid down his office, having finally convinced even his bitterest antagonists of the justice and expediency of his policy of calm moderation. He was succeeded by his old friend, the Earl of Elgin, who continued faithfully to follow in his footsteps. The new Viceroy was particularly concerned to emphasize the necessity for harmonious co-operation between the British Government and the Federal States; and the speech which he made in the great Agra Durbar of 1863, marks a definite epoch in the relations between British India and the Indian Princes. The Governor-General dwelt particularly upon the Queen's deep interest in the welfare of her protected allies; and upon the anxiety of Government to assist them, in labouring for the good of their people. Most unfortunately, Lord Elgin, who had already given proof of great ability and statesmanship, suddenly died after eighteen months. He was succeeded by John Lawrence, the experienced administrator whose work in the Punjab had contributed so materially to the new prosperity of that province.

For the last few years, the domestic problems of India had occupied the attention of British statesmen to the virtual exclusion of everything else; but at this point foreign affairs begin once more to be important. The extension of the British possessions up to the foot of the Afghan hills led inevitably to contact with the warlike tribes who had for ages been accustomed to make destructive raids into the plains. The Government found itself driven from time to time to embark upon punitive expeditions to restrain the turbulence of its new neighbours. In 1865 it was found that a colony of Muhammadan fanatics, situated

North-  
West  
Frontier  
Affairs.

at Sitana between the Indus and the Jhelum, was in active communication with certain disaffected Wahabi communities of Patna.

The whole border was kept on the alarm by savage raids, and it was feared that unless prompt measures were taken, the consequences might be serious. Lord Elgin despatched an expedition which was held up by a combination of tribes in the Ambela Pass, and not until reinforcements arrived were the tribes defeated and their stronghold destroyed. When Sir John Lawrence became Viceroy, he took the deepest interest in matters affecting the North-West Frontier; and his first-hand knowledge of local conditions proved a valuable asset to Government. With all his care and skill, he was unable to prevent occasional outbreaks. In 1868 another expensive expedition had to be despatched against Hazara, and this, while momentarily successful, produced no lasting effects. But it was particularly in relation to Afghanistan that Sir John Lawrence was destined to exercise a profound influence upon the course of future policy. The old Amir, Dost Muhammad

Afghanis-  
tan.

Khan, who had ruled his turbulent territory so long, died in 1863. Sir John Lawrence was determined to take no part in the internal troubles of Afghanistan but to recognize the Chief who held Kabul. Accordingly, the rightful heir, Sher Ali, was first recognized by Government; but, when defeated by his brother Afzal Khan, found himself quickly dropped. This policy of aloofness offended both Afghan factions. They roundly stated that it was impossible for any nation to get on with the English, who appeared to desire that members of the ruling family should exterminate each other. But from the Viceroy's point of view the position was very difficult. On the one hand past history gave a plain warning against the danger of interfering in Afghan politics; on the other, a policy of non-intervention seemed to open the door to Russian

ambition. The Czar's frontiers had now advanced to the boundaries of Bokhara and Khiva. Tashkend was annexed in 1865; two years later a Russian Governor-General was set up in Turkestan. The 'Russian

**Russian Advance.** Menace' was then no idle dream. The remedy lay, as Lawrence gradually perceived, in coming to agreement with Russia—in other words, in removing the whole Afghan question from the province of the Viceroy to that of the Home Government. Meanwhile, the Viceroy maintained friendly relations with Amir Sher Ali—who was now supreme—but declined to undertake any entanglements. As has been well said, he 'lulled the wakeful Anglophobia of Russian generals, and disarmed their inconvenient propensity to meet supposed plots of ours in Afghanistan by counter-plots of their own in the same country.'

This policy was subsequently continued by Lawrence's successor, yielding excellent results. The Viceroy was compelled for a short time to turn his attention also to the eastern frontier, where troubles arose between Bhutan and the Bengal Government. After some desultory fighting, an agreement was arranged by which the Bhutanese ceded the north into Bengal and Assam, in return for a perpetual rent paid to them by the Government.

**Agrarian Reform.** So far as domestic affairs are concerned, the administration of Sir John Lawrence represents a continuance of the policy pursued by his immediate predecessors. But in certain directions he displayed considerable enterprise. His administration of the Punjab had taught him to look upon the Indian peasant as the foundation of the State; and he was determined so far as possible to espouse the cause of the cultivators. In the year 1868, two notable measures were passed, each owing much to the Governor-General himself. The Punjab Tenancy Act recognized the occupancy rights of all tenants who had held their

land for a certain time, thus constituting a very real protection for the sturdy and self-reliant peasantry of that province. Sir John Lawrence desired to extend the same policy to Oudh; but in this project he encountered considerable difficulties. In Oudh, unlike the Punjab, the land-holding element was the backbone of society. The mutiny had taught the British authorities the danger of ignoring prescriptive rights; and in Lord Canning's time the Talukdars had been treated with considerable indulgence. The Governor-General was, however, determined to lay at least the foundations of tenant-right; and the Oudh Tenancy Act of 1868 secured a certain measure of protection for the cultivators. Occupancy rights in the soil were arranged for about one-fifth of the rural population; and a greater measure of equity was introduced into the current practice regarding compensation for improvements and increases of rents. Sir John Lawrence deserves the utmost credit for this salutary measure which was passed in the face of formidable opposition. Indeed, among the most notable achievements of his administration must be reckoned the extension to the peasantry of Oudh and the Punjab of the protection which Lord Canning had given to the cultivators of Bengal. Unfortunately, during his Viceroyalty the condition of the peasantry suffered damage from two terrible catastrophes. Famine broke out in 1866 in Orissa, the effect of which was greatly enhanced by devastating floods. The Government was caught unawares; and the poverty of the tracts affected, combined with the absence of efficient means of communication, caused great loss of life. Two years later famine attacked Bundelkhand and Rajputana. But the authorities were now on the alert. The principle was definitely enunciated that Government officials were bound to take every available means to prevent deaths by starvation. Remedial measures were introduced at a very early stage; and suffering was reduced

to a minimum—though at somewhat extravagant cost.

The Governor-Generalship of Sir John Lawrence is particularly notable for the great expenditure upon public works including roads, railways, irrigation schemes, barracks, and the like.

The care of the woods and forests of India, which had suffered untold damage through centuries of neglect, was made over to a Forest Department, under whose scientific management an important branch of the natural resources of the country has been conserved and improved. State encouragement was also given to cotton-growing; commercial enterprise was stimulated by increased postal facilities; and the prosperity of the country was accordingly augmented. Unfortunately, in 1866 a commercial crisis due to over-speculation caused a temporary setback to the growth of trade.

The lavish expenditure of Sir John Lawrence upon material improvements, while laying the foundation for the development of trade and commerce, placed a heavy burden upon the resources of India in his time. The normal annual expenditure rose from £45·75 millions to £54·5 millions; and at the end of his five years' term of office he bequeathed to his successor a net deficit of £2·5 millions.

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## Book III.—THE GROWTH OF MODERN INDIA

### CHAPTER I

#### Peace at Home and Troubles Abroad

SIR JOHN LAWRENCE was succeeded by the Earl of Mayo, who took over charge in January, 1869. With the arrival of this Irish statesman, a new era may be said to begin. The mutiny, as we have noticed, had brought India under the direct government of the British Crown, sweeping away many archaic survivals of the days when the Company was primarily a dividend-earning institution. The outbreak had also, however, produced a bitterness of feeling between Indians and Englishmen which took some time to die down. But for the wisdom of Lord Canning, the transition period would have been much longer, and its effects upon the progress of India more lamentable than was actually the case. Fortunately, the moderation of the authorities did much to heal the wounds on either side. The decade which elapsed between the mutiny and the Government of Lord Mayo sufficed to allow most of the bitterness to disappear. The internal condition of the country had become more stable; the introduction of modern means of communication, while stimulating commercial enterprise, opened up prospects of unity between the different races in India in a manner hitherto undreamt of. The new Viceroy was a man who had played no part in the struggle of 1857, who had no personal recollections of those terrible months, who came to India with a mind free from all racial hostility. It is indeed from the

Governor-Generalship of Lord Mayo that we may trace the beginning of that steady development of India along lines leading inevitably in the direction of responsible Government within the British Commonwealth.

The great contribution of Lord Mayo towards the progress of India was his establishment of an orderly financial system. His first task was to deal with the deficit left by his predecessor.

**Financial Reforms.**

With the support of Sir Richard Temple and the Strachey brothers, measures were taken to balance the budget. The income-tax was raised, and the salt duties slightly enhanced. More important still, a new era was introduced into the financial relations between the Central and Provincial Governments. We have already noticed the weakness of the previous system, under which the local Governments had no inducement to exercise economy. In December, 1870, a new plan was introduced. A fixed yearly grant, settled for five years at a time, was made to each of the Provincial Governments; and this grant could be spent and allocated with a certain degree of freedom. The local Governments, having now achieved a certain measure of financial autonomy, had every incentive to efficiency of management. At the same time, the provincial authorities were encouraged to augment their revenues. This, while resulting in the imposition of a slightly increased burden of taxation upon the people, provided the means for great strides in administrative efficiency and the construction of works of public utility. In the Central Government the great spending departments were brought under strict supervision. As a result of these reforms the deficit was converted into a surplus, and the financial stability of India was placed upon firm foundations. Had Lord Mayo been spared to complete the reforms which he projected, there is reason to believe that his services to India would have been of even more distinguished character. Unfortunately, in February,

1872, while inspecting the convict settlement in the Andaman Islands, he was murdered by a Pathan fanatic. India thus lost an able and sympathetic Viceroy who had shown an instinctive comprehension of her needs and who was well fitted both by his immense energy and by his charming personality to carry through far-reaching reforms with the minimum of friction. His work was continued by his successor Lord Northbrook.

A cautious and sound administrator, the new Viceroy made it his object to reduce taxation, and to give the land rest. A member of the distinguished financial house of Baring, Lord Northbrook displayed an admirable mastery of economic facts and statistics. In his time the country passed through an era of material prosperity; a result partly of sound financial administration, and partly of the stimulus afforded to commerce by the opening of the Suez Canal. In consequence, the policy of free trade, whose acceptance was well nigh universal in England, began to make its appearance upon the stage of Indian politics. Until the year 1868, the Indian tariff, which had been levied purely for revenue purposes, imposed an *ad valorem* duty of 10 per cent on all imports and 3 per cent on a number of exports. In deference at once to free trade doctrines and to the growing volume of traffic, Sir John Lawrence had reduced the import duties to 7½ per cent. Lord Northbrook in 1875 further lowered the rate to 5 per cent. At the same time, he abolished the majority of export duties, including the export duty on wheat. One consequence of this action was a remarkable growth of wheat cultivation in the Punjab and the Indus Valley, which gradually spread until India became a great wheat exporting country. It is important to remember, in order to guard against misapprehension, that this extension of wheat cultivation took place to meet the demands of the external market. As time went on, the export



trade in wheat added to the strength of the country in two ways. In the first place, it brought wealth into the hands of the Indian cultivators; and in the second place, it provided a food surplus which, in time of famine, could be retained within the country by the temporary prohibition of export. It is very interesting to notice in the light of subsequent developments, that though Lord Northbrook was a free-trader, he refused to abolish the low general tariff upon imports which was an item in Indian revenue. Strong pressure was brought to bear upon him to abolish the 5 per cent duty on Manchester cotton goods. This he entirely refused to do, on the grounds first that the country could not afford to lose so valuable an item in its revenue; and secondly that it was unwise to give any opportunity for the belief that the interests of Lancashire were preferred to those of India. To this point of view he stuck, despite the policy of the Conservative Secretary of State, Lord Salisbury. In general, Lord Northbrook's administration of Indian finances must be pronounced conspicuously successful. It is, however, regrettable that he chose to remove the income-tax rather than to lower the salt duty. His opposition to the former impost was probably a result of the general free-trade dislike of direct taxation; but it exposed him to the criticism that he was relieving the rich at the expense of the poor. The strength of the Indian economic structure was shown, when famine broke out in 1873-74 in densely populated portions of Bengal and Bihar. The administration, taught by previous failures, were now prepared with elaborate schemes for the transport and distribution of food supplies. Relief works were everywhere established, and the crisis successfully surmounted.<sup>1</sup>

We have noticed that Lord Northbrook found himself in conflict with the Conservative Government in the matter of Manchester Cotton interests. He was also destined to encounter a serious

disagreement upon the question of foreign and in particular, Afghan affairs. These now demand our attention. Lord Lawrence's policy in regard to Afghanistan, may be summarized as a

Lawrence  
to Lytton.

refusal to interfere in the internal politics of the country, and an endeavour to arrive at a reasonable understanding with Russia. Lord Mayo had pursued this policy with conspicuous success; his personal charm enabling him to win the respect and friendship of

Lord  
Mayo and  
Afghanis-  
tan.

the Amir Sher Ali. At a meeting held in March, 1869, the Amir, though he had not obtained the definite treaty and the fixed annual subsidy that he solicited, had been

greatly impressed with the power of the British Dominion in India and with the ability and tact of Lord Mayo. The same Viceroy was, moreover, extremely successful in bringing about a satisfactory understanding

with the Russian Government. The formal negotiations between London and St. Petersburg were, of course, outside his province, but a tour which he had made in

Russia.

Russia as a young man had caused him to be personally known to many officials who had now risen to high position. He was, therefore, enabled to supplement the formal diplomatic intercourse between Great Britain and Russia, by private letters, with the result that the Czar became convinced of the non-aggressive character of British policy in Asia. Russia agreed to respect as Afghanistan all the dominions which Sher Ali actually possessed; Persian aggression was for a moment checked; and the Amir again enjoyed-recognized boundary against his neighbours.

The negotiations with Persia initiated at this time

Baluchis-  
tan.

brought Baluchistan within the orbit of Lord Mayo's diplomacy. A boundary line was laid down between the dominions of the Shah and

those of the Khan of Kelat; and order was gradually introduced into the country on the Indian side of the

frontier. The Khan of Kelat, who was perpetually at variance with his tribal chieftains, welcomed the mediation of the British, who, a few years after, in 1876, occupied by friendly agreement the important strategic point of Quetta. The internal differences between the Khan and his Chieftains which had threatened to disrupt Baluchistan were successfully adjusted; and as in the case of Bhutan, the British Government from this time forward paid quit-rents for certain districts, the natural position of which enabled the authorities to safeguard the peace of the country.

Lord Northbrook was a firm follower of Lawrence's policy of non-intervention in Afghan affairs. It was, however, undeniable that the steady and unchecked advance of Russia towards the Amir's northern frontier looked most ominous. Sher Ali became uneasy; and the capture of Khiva by Russia in 1873 caused him great alarm. He sent an Envoy to Simla representing that he was startled at the near approach of Russia, and expressing a desire for close treaty relations with the British. Lord Northbrook was convinced of the reasonableness of this request; and asked permission to help Afghanistan with money, arms and troops if the country was invaded. But the Liberal Government of the day did not concur. Accordingly Sher Ali, discouraged in his hopes of obtaining British assistance, began to fear that he might be compelled to make terms with Russia. At this juncture a Conservative Ministry under Disraeli, with the Marquess of Salisbury as Secretary of State for India, came into power. If the Liberal Government had been unsympathetic to the Amir's desire for protection, the Conservative Government swung to the other extreme. Instead of continuing the wise policy of Lawrence, which was to maintain an attitude of friendly non-intervention in Afghan domestic affairs, and to come to terms with Russia in order to secure the

integrity of the Amir's dominions, they determined to conclude a binding engagement to support the Amir and to defend Afghanistan. Unfortunately, they coupled

Lord  
Salisbury's  
Attitude.

with this scheme the request that the Amir should receive a British Representative at the Court of Kabul. Lord Northbrook and his Council emphatically dissented. Since Lord Salisbury stood firm, the Viceroy resigned. He was succeeded in 1876 by Lord Lytton, who had been

Lord  
Lytton.

sent out by the Conservative Government with instructions to conclude a definite alliance with Sher Ali. The Amir would have been glad to sign a treaty containing a promise of British support in the case of foreign aggression; but he knew the temper of his own people too well to accept the stipulated mission. The new Viceroy attempted to carry matters with a high hand; but the Amir steadily refused to concede the point at issue. Lord Lytton's provocative attitude alarmed Sher Ali; and the occupation of Quetta about this time led him to fear that the British desired to put pressure upon him. He was confirmed, as it seemed, in this view by the establishment of a British Agency at Gilgit. But it is quite possible that peace might still have been preserved had it not been for the course of European affairs. In the year 1876 Serbia and Montenegro revolted against the

European  
Affairs  
produce a  
Crisis.

Turks; and next year Russia joined them. In 1878, the forces of the Czar crossed the Balkans and marched upon Turkey in Europe. British feeling ran very high in favour of Turkey; and in January, 1878, a fleet was despatched to the Dardanelles in order to protect Constantinople. Further, by a dramatic stroke, Disraeli summoned troops from India to Malta. The Russians thereupon concluded peace on terms very advantageous for themselves with the Ottoman Empire. Disraeli refused to recognize the treaty; and at the Berlin Congress in

1878, he succeeded in securing the modification of its terms in a direction favourable to Turkey. Being thus thwarted in Europe, Russia naturally determined to make a demonstration on the North-West Frontier. A Russian Envoy was deputed to Kabul, and was very unwillingly received by the frightened Sher Ali. But since he could obtain no help from the British, save on terms which he knew to be impossible, the Amir dared not quarrel with the Russians. He, therefore, proceeded to enter into a treaty of permanent friendship and alliance with the Czar—a fact which was not discovered until his papers fell into the hands of the British when Kabul was occupied.

At this critical juncture, Lord Lytton behaved in a manner which cannot be too strongly condemned. The Prime Minister and Lord Salisbury were addressing representations to Russia for the recall of the Russian Envoy from Kabul. These representations were successful. The Russian Envoy left at once. But Lord Lytton, despite the instructions of the Home Government, would not wait; he determined to send a British Mission forthwith. He forced the hand of the Government by despatching Sir Neville Chamberlain and a Mission up the Khyber Pass. The Afghan frontier authorities declined to allow the Mission to proceed. Lord Lytton declared that the Envoy had been forcibly repulsed; and despite the reluctance of the Home Government, issued an ultimatum to Sher Ali which made war inevitable. Three columns of attack were despatched, two of which operated in the north, and the third by the Bolan Pass.

At first all went well. There was little effective opposition, and Sher Ali fled to Turkistan. It was decided to recognize his eldest son, Yakub Khan, as Amir; and in May, 1879, a treaty was concluded at Gandamak, under which Britain was to control Afghan foreign relations, to

Lord  
Lytton's  
Impetu-  
osity.

Afghanis-  
tan  
invaded.

defend the country, and to station Agents at such places as might be selected. ~~A British Envoy was installed at once in Kabul, before the effect of the late disturbances had passed away. But the fierce Afghan hatred of foreign interference soon broke out. In September there was a riot, and the Envoy and his escort were slain after a heroic struggle. The Amir, Yakub Khan, had no hand in these proceedings, but found himself quite unable to control his people. He surrendered to the British.~~ Kabul was occupied and martial law proclaimed. Lord Lytton determined to detach the province of Kandahar and to make it over to an independent Chief. After some hesitation Kabul and North-Western Afghanistan were offered to Abdurrahman, a nephew of Sher Ali. Before these arrangements were completed, the Conservative Government had received a severe defeat in the general election of April, 1880, and the Liberals came back to power. Lord

Lord  
Lytton  
resigns.

Lytton, whose policy had been heavily attacked, at once resigned, and was replaced by a Liberal nominee, Lord Ripon, who was instructed to bring about a peaceable settlement as quickly as possible. The new Viceroy was strengthened in this policy by the course of events. In June, 1880, a small British force was defeated at Maiwand near Kandahar; but the disaster was retrieved by General Roberts, who successfully conducted his famous march from Kabul and inflicted a terrible reverse upon the aggressor. ~~Abdurrahman was recognized as~~

Amir  
Abdur-  
rahman.

~~Amir, the British guaranteeing to defend~~ Afghanistan against external aggression, and to allow the ruler of Kabul to possess also Kandahar and Herat. British troops were entirely with-  
~~drawn except from the places necessary for the command of the Bolan Pass.~~ Abdurrahman, left to himself, subdued the whole country in a short time, defeated all rivals, and ruled Afghanistan with an iron hand. The

final result of the second Afghan War was thus the establishment of a stable and effective government under Abdurrahman, which the British were pledged to defend and protect in the case of external aggression.

The mistaken policy pursued by Lord Lytton in connection with Afghanistan has largely overshadowed his reputation as a statesman. But in fairness it must be remembered that his internal policy was distinguished for some admirable achievements. Perhaps his greatest title to fame was his excellent work in connection with famine-relief. Between 1876 and 1878 a terrible famine broke out in Mysore, the Deccan and in large areas of Madras and Bombay. Fever and cholera followed. The Government made desperate efforts to repair the ravages of the calamity, and no less than £11 millions were expended from the Indian Treasury. Nevertheless, it is estimated that more than 5 million people perished. Lord Lytton threw himself into the task of organizing famine relief with the greatest energy; and did much to rectify the faulty policy pursued by certain local Governments. He took advantage of the gathering of an Imperial assemblage at Delhi at the beginning of 1877—called to solemnize the Queen's assumption of the title of Empress—in order to arrange concerted action with the heads of the local Governments. Lord Lytton's most notable advance was his decision, instead of dealing with every famine as it occurred, to lay down a regular policy of preventive measures. He appointed a Famine Commission which drew up careful regulations for the granting of relief. Arrangements were made for employing the able-bodied on relief works and giving gratuitous help to the impotent. More important still, Budget arrangements were sanctioned for an annual surplus over the ordinary revenue, part of which was devoted to the establishment of a Famine Fund, and part for the construction of

Lord  
Lytton's  
Domestic  
Record.

Famine  
Relief.

—railways-and-canals-through districts particularly liable to failure of the monsoon. The work of Lord Lytton may be said to constitute the foundation of the modern system of famine relief; and from his day onwards can be traced the gradual mastery, by means of administrative resources, of the terrible scourge which had from time immemorial afflicted India.

Lord Lytton's Governor-Generalship was further notable for the steps taken to encourage trade.

The  
Tariff.

The Inland Customs line stretching across India to control the transit of salt and sugar was abolished; and import duties were remitted on a number of commodities. Lord Lytton was anxious, in accordance with the prevailing theories of free-trade, to open up India to the commerce of the world; and had it not been for the requirements of domestic finance, he would probably have abolished all import duties. In 1879, he removed the duties on the coarsest kind of cotton cloths, despite some popular and official opposition which accused him of truckling to the desires of Lancashire manufacturers. It may be doubted whether the interests of the Indian Mills were seriously affected; and it seems plain from the perusal of the correspondence that the Cabinet and the Viceroy were honestly convinced that both India and England would ultimately benefit by the abolition of all duties. The financial stability of the Government was further strengthened in 1877 by continuing the policy of decentralization in regard to the local administrations. Lord Mayo's plan of giving provincial governments fixed grants from the Imperial Treasury was extended into allowing them a share of the revenues. This gave the local administrations a direct incentive to efficiency and economy, the effect of which was largely to improve the financial position of the Government as a whole.

The fact that Lord Lytton's name is associated with the passing of the Vernacular Press Act in 1878, by



which he attempted to moderate the attacks levelled by the vernacular newspapers against British policy, has led to the belief that he was hostile to Indian aspirations. But it seems difficult to believe that such an accusation is true, in view of the progressive steps which he attempted to press upon the Home Government. He planned the enrolment of an Indian peerage, and suggested the formation of an Indian Privy Council of Ruling Chiefs to advise the Viceroy. He took stern action against the tendency of the Courts to pass lenient sentences on Europeans who had assaulted Indians. Further by the foundation of the Statutory Civil Service in 1879, he attempted to encourage the recruitment of Indians for positions of official responsibility. One-sixth of the posts which had hitherto been reserved for the Covenanted Civil Service, together with some of the more important positions in the uncovenanted services, were combined to form the new Statutory Civil Service, which was entirely reserved for Indians. At the same time, Indians retained the right to occupy as many places in the Covenanted Service as their success in the competitive examination at London enabled them to win. The experiment of the Statutory Civil Service was not a success, for it failed to attract the right class of men. But its initiation was an honest, if somewhat over-cautious, attempt to give effect to the previous promises that no native of British India should be debarred by reason of his nationality from holding official position under the Crown.

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## CHAPTER II

### Progress and Evolution

LORD LYTTON's successor, the Earl of Ripon, was a man of very different type. Like Lord William Bentinck, his interest was primarily in political and social reform. He made it the object of his term of office to liberalize, so far as he could, the machinery of the Indian Government, and to break down the boundaries which separated the bureaucracy from the people.

As a result of the introduction of Western education into India, there had now grown up an educated-middle-class, whose political ideas were modelled upon the liberal doctrines of Burke. Their ideals and ambitions, if Western in origin, were now grafted on to the traditional Indian culture, and reinforced by consciousness of the possession of natural ability. The rising generation of Indians began to demand in more and more emphatic terms a share in the administration of their own country. With these aspirations Lord Ripon was in hearty sympathy, and he was determined to afford them as much scope as lay in his power. He recognized that any transfer of power from a centralized bureaucratic administration to a comparatively untrained population must be accompanied by a certain loss of efficiency. This, however, he was prepared to face. He desired that Indians should have an opportunity of learning by their own mistakes, and that his reforms should serve as an instrument of political education.

The most substantial element in these reforms took the shape of an advance in the direction of local self-government. We have already noticed on a previous page the manner in which municipal institutions on the English model had been introduced at an early date into the

Lord  
Ripon and—  
Indian  
Aspirations.

Local Self-  
Govern-  
ment.

Presidency towns. The town corporations consisted of a Mayor and Alderman; but for some time elected representatives of the rate-payers were unknown. In the year 1861 elected Corporations were established; and from this time forward the administration of the Presidency towns has corresponded fairly closely to that of English cities. Outside the Presidency towns there is little to record. An Act had, it is true, been passed in 1850 providing for the constitution of town committees and the levy of certain taxes by such towns as desired to do so. Few, however, came forward; and town administration became increasingly satisfactory. The first step towards the development of local self-governing institutions on the western model must be ascribed to Lord Mayo. His scheme of financial devolution enabled the provincial Governments to devote a higher proportion of their funds to local-public works and to the strengthening of municipal institutions. But the great step forward was taken by Lord Ripon.

Lord  
Ripon's  
Notable  
Policy.

In the years 1883 to 1885, his government passed a series of Acts framing for India a formal scheme of local self-government, which followed fairly closely the English system of County Councils and District Boards. He further extended the powers of the municipalities; and laid upon these bodies definite duties, for the discharge of which they were to be given adequate funds. The real innovation lay in the character and composition of the new Boards—and—Councils. The Governor-General desired non-official members to preponderate, and wherever possible, he introduced the principle of election. The Chairmen of the Boards, like the Chairmen of the Municipalities, were to be, as far as possible, elected. Moreover, the Governor-General laid down the principle that official control was to be exercised rather from without than from within; that is to say, the new bodies were to be allowed freedom in the manage-

ment of their affairs subject to the revision, rather than to the interference, of local Governments. The sanction of the provincial authorities was required to give validity to certain Acts ; and powers were retained to set aside the proceedings of the Boards, or to suspend them altogether in the case of neglect of duty. The system thus liberally framed by Lord Ripon had necessarily to be varied in accordance with the local conditions of different parts of the country. The provincial Governments were given a very large discretion as to the manner in which it was to be applied. The consequence was that for some time the letter rather than the spirit of the resolution was followed. The officers in charge of the district machinery, while

Hopes not realized.

nominally permitting the development of non-official powers, in practice continued to administer local affairs much as before. The skill and experience of these officials, and their competence to execute the work which Lord Ripon desired to entrust to the elected members, in combination with the inexperience and diffidence of the members themselves, operated to disappoint in considerable degree the hopes with which the scheme had been introduced. As we have seen, he intended it as a measure of political and popular education. To some extent, it is true, the new machinery of local self-government afforded a valuable training in affairs to public-spirited Indian gentlemen. But the matters allowed to fall within the competence of the municipalities and local boards were as a rule so insignificant, and the influence of the local officials so preponderating, that non-official gentlemen of the type who have always constituted the backbone of self-governing institutions in England and America were reluctant to come forward. Not until the eve of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, was this condition of affairs satisfactorily remedied,

The liberal policy of Lord Ripon, and his sympathy with Indian aspirations, were not confined to the sphere of local self-government. He devoted anxious care and attention to the increase of educational facilities. As a result of the Commission which he appointed, arrangements were made for a considerable increase in the number of primary and secondary schools. This was a most healthy step; for despite the fact that the Universities of India had been in existence only since 1857, they were already engrossing the lion's share of popularity, with the result that the primary and secondary education were somewhat neglected.

We have so far noticed Lord Ripon's care for the interests of the educated classes. But his benevolence was no less marked in the case of the masses. He devoted much attention to improving, so far as legislative enactments enabled him to do so, the condition of the rural population. He planned the Bengal Tenancy Bill, which was subsequently passed in the time of his successor. This measure extended the provisions of the Bengal Rent Act of 1859, by giving the cultivator great security. It also restricted the landlord's power of eviction; and framed rules for arbitration between Zamindars and tenants. Considering the manner in which the Permanent Settlements operated to secure the landlords at the expense of the peasantry, the new Tenancy Bill must be pronounced a great and noteworthy piece of legislation. The Governor-General also turned his attention to Oudh, where the difficulties of the ryots, as we have already noticed, were serious. He planned and executed an Act which carried further the policy of Lord Lawrence's measures of 1868. Tenants who were not protected under the earlier enactment were now given a certain security, and a right to compensation for any improvements they had made. A third measure was

planned to define and safeguard the rights of the tenantry in the Punjab. Lord Ripon also endeavoured to protect the labouring classes in the towns. The growth of Indian industry and manufacture was tending to concentrate large masses of industrial labourers in certain great centres. The conditions of labour in Indian factories were bad; and Lord Ripon was determined, so far as he could, to prevent any repetition of those serious evils which had accompanied the progress of the Industrial Revolution in England. Accordingly, a Factory Act was passed in 1881 which laid the foundation for much subsequent legislation of a beneficent character. The hours of employment for children were restricted; provision made for the proper guarding of dangerous machinery, and factory Inspectors were appointed to see that the law was duly enforced.

By his unwearied philanthropy in all these directions, Lord Ripon had endeared himself to the hearts of the Indian people. But it may be doubted whether his championship of their cause was fully appreciated until the time of the Ilbert Bill controversy. ~~It should be remembered that under the Criminal Procedure Code, a European British subject outside the Presidency towns could only be tried by a European Magistrate.~~ The gradual rise of Indian members of the Covenanted Service to high position rendered such a bar to their judicial activities most invidious. Lord Ripon accordingly determined to abolish judicial qualifications based on race distinctions; and Mr. (later Sir) Courtenay Ilbert prepared a Bill for the purpose. Unfortunately, the European community in India, which was irrationally alarmed by Lord Ripon's encouragement of Indian aspirations, conducted a fierce agitation against the Bill. Indian opinion was, at this time, not in a position to make its influence adequately felt; with the result that the Viceroy was compelled to agree to a compromise surrendering the principle which

he was striving to establish. 'It was decided that every European subject brought before a District Magistrate or Sessions Judge (whether an Indian or European) could claim to be tried by a jury, half of whom were to be Europeans or Americans. As Indians could not make a similar claim, the privileged position of Europeans was still maintained, and the endeavour of the Government to remove race distinctions was thus completely foiled.'<sup>1</sup> But the Governor-General's personal popularity with the Indian people was, if anything, enhanced by his failure. His liberal measures of reform, his repeal of Lord Lytton's Vernacular Press Act, and his undisguised sympathy with Indian aspirations, caused him to be regarded as the great champion of Indian liberties.

When Lord Ripon resigned in December, 1884, he was succeeded by the Earl of Dufferin, one of the most brilliant men who have ever been called upon to rule India. The personal charm and remarkable eloquence of the new Viceroy when added to his natural capacity, had secured for him a long and successful career in diplomacy. The atmosphere in which he first found himself gave full scope for his talents. He made it his care to soften those unfortunate racial passions which had been aroused by the Ilbert Bill controversy; and thanks to his tact and knowledge of mankind, the bitterness gradually died down. He was careful to bring to completion the great agrarian measures which Lord Ripon had initiated; and it was in his time that the Bengal, the Oudh, and the Punjab enactments took their place upon the Statute Book.

His relationship with the Indian Princes was particularly cordial. The new policy of alliance and co-operation, to which we have already adverted, had rapidly exercised a fortunate influence upon the relations between the Supreme

Lord  
Dufferin.

Indian  
States.

<sup>1</sup> Roberts.

Government and the Indian States. In the time of Lord Ripon, a tangible earnest of the attitude of the Government of India towards the great Ruling houses had been provided by the rendition of Mysore. We noticed upon an earlier page that this State had been taken under British control as a result of the maladministration of the ruling Maharaja. During the Viceroyalty of Sir John Lawrence, it was agreed to restore the State to the young heir as soon as he should come of age. In the time of Lord Ripon this promise was redeemed; to the gratification of India at large. In Lord Dufferin's time, another proof of the desire of Government to maintain cordial relations with the Indian States was provided. In 1886, the famous fort of Gwalior, ~~one of the strongest~~ places in all India, was handed back to the Maharaja Scindia. At the same time, the cantonment of Morar was given up and the town of Jhansi received in exchange.

In view of Lord Dufferin's previous career, there is no matter for surprise in the fact that his principal interest proved to be foreign policy.

Foreign  
Affairs.

Afghan affairs soon claimed his attention. The Amir Abdurrahman had now consolidated his power in Afghanistan. This was very fortunate, both for the Amir himself and for the Government of India; since the Russians, having rapidly advanced their Central Asian frontier, were now actually in contact with the Afghan outposts. As a result of negotiations between London and St. Petersburg, Lord Ripon's Government accepted a Russian proposal for the demarcation of the northern frontier of Afghanistan. Somewhat naturally,

Afghanis-  
tan and  
Russia.

both the Russians and the Afghans hastened to consolidate the territories which they claimed. A skirmish between Russian and Afghan troops took place at Panjdeh between Herat and Merv. This incident might well have led to war between England and Russia; for while on the one



hand Russian troops were being hastened in the direction of Afghanistan, the Indian Government was assembling an army at Quetta to assist the Amir in the event of an invasion. But happily, at the moment when the skirmish occurred, Amir Abdurrahman was actually visiting Lord Dufferin at Rawalpindi. He showed himself unwilling to make too much of a mere frontier skirmish, saying that he was not sure whether Panjdeh really belonged to him or not. He further stated that, while he was very anxious to keep the Russians out of Afghanistan, he proposed to do so with the aid rather of English munitions and English money than of English troops. Lord Dufferin was, therefore, able to reassure the Home Government; the war scare passed off; and the Boundary Commission continued its work. The frontier was eventually settled up to the River Oxus; and the advance of Russia in the direction of Herat was definitely limited. Further, the relations between the Amir and the British were greatly strengthened by the tact and cordiality of Lord Dufferin, who realized that the Amir could not ignore the Afghan jealousy of foreigners, and was, therefore, compelled to decline the services of English military experts for the strengthening of his fortifications.

The second important incident in Lord Dufferin's Viceroyalty, so far as foreign affairs are concerned, was the completion of the conquest of Burma. The first two wars with the Burmese had resulted, as we have seen, in the annexation of Arakan, Tenasserim and Pegu. Upper Burma still remained independent. King Thebaw, who succeeded to the throne in 1878, behaved in a most arbitrary and intolerable fashion, with the result that the British Resident at Mandalay was withdrawn in 1879. Knowing that the British were involved in difficulties both in Afghanistan and South Africa about this time, King Thebaw attempted to secure the intervention of the

French. In 1885 he concluded a treaty with France giving that country certain valuable commercial privileges. At the same time he imposed a heavy fine upon a British trading company. Lord Dufferin demanded an immediate settlement of all matters in dispute; and when King Thebaw refused to make amends, Upper Burma was invaded. Hardly any resistance was made; and within ten days the first part of the war was over. At the beginning of 1886, Upper Burma was formally annexed. But when Thebaw was deposed and deported, guerilla fighting broke out which lasted for about five years. Burma had long been infested by dacoits; who were now reinforced by various pretenders to the throne, and by bands of dismissed soldiery. The country was only subdued by establishing a system of small block-houses all over the disturbed areas. As soon as the actual fighting was over and the dacoit bands had been broken up, the introduction of British administration was rapid. Public works of all kinds were quickly projected and put into execution, so that Burma before long became rich and prosperous.

In 1888 Lord Dufferin, who was now wearied by advancing age and unremitting labour, laid down his office. He was succeeded in December of the same year by the Marquis of Lansdowne. 1888

Lord Lansdowne's Viceroyalty is principally notable for the progress achieved in domestic matters.

**Lord Lansdowne.** We have seen that Lord Ripon had laid the foundation of the modern Factory Law of India by his measure of 1881. In Lord Lansdowne's time the provisions of Lord Ripon's Act were ~~extended and amplified~~. The hours of employment for women were subjected to a daily maximum; the minimum age at which children could be employed in factories was raised; and night work was forbidden for them. ~~Further, a weekly holiday was prescribed for all factory hands.~~ This measure, although it would be

considered inadequate by modern opinion, represented a very real advance on previous conditions. It further shows that the Government of India were determined to protect, so far as they saw their way to do so, the interests of industrial labour.

A second notable piece of legislation was passed by Lord Lansdowne's Government. Since the year when Lord William Bentinck had abolished *Sati*, the British authorities had been chary of advocating large measures of social reform until such time as they believed that public opinion was ripe for the change. This feeling was reinforced by the mutiny; which, as we have seen, plainly demonstrated the dangers of moving too fast. In the time of Lord Lansdowne, however, the feeling of uneasiness to which the year 1857 gave rise had in a large measure died down; and Government felt themselves free to proceed with a measure which had for some time been advocated by advanced sections of Indian opinion. This was the Age of Consent Bill, which raised the limit within which protection was given to young girls from 10 to 12 years. The measure excited considerable opposition on the part of the conservative sections of the population; and was widely represented as an attack on religion. Lord Lansdowne, however, took up the position that 'in all cases where demands preferred in the name of religion would lead to practices inconsistent with individual safety and the public peace, and condemned by every system of law and morality in the world, it is religion and not morality that must give way.'

Even more significant than those developments in social matters was the movement now steadily growing up in favour of political advance. We have noticed the manner in which Lord Ripon had fostered Indian aspirations. Although this liberal statesman had been unable to perform everything

**Social  
Legislation.**

**Political  
Stirrings.**

which he had striven to accomplish, his encouragement was responsible for a great political awakening among the educated middle classes. The racial feeling aroused by the Ilbert Bill, regrettable though it was in many ways, had at least this good result; it revealed to Indians their comparative impotence in political matters and determined them to work for constitutional reforms which would give them an adequate share in the Government of their own country. The rally of Indian feeling to the side of the Viceroy, and the organized demonstrations conducted in his honour, laid the foundation for a political movement of a hitherto unprecedented type. The introduction of Western education, and the prevalence of English among the educated middle classes, had encouraged the rise of a body of Indian intellectuals in every part of India who were bound to each other by common liberal principles and by common national aspirations. Differences of caste, of creed, and of race, which had for so many years effectually separated the intellectual classes in different parts of India, had now yielded to community of feeling based upon Western education and English speech. Through the Ilbert Bill agitation, this small but growing section of the intellectuals of India discovered itself; and before long the project was mooted of a permanent organization, which should bring educated India together in a joint enterprise for the pursuit of its common aspirations. Thanks very largely to the encouragement and organizing capacity of Mr. A. O. Hume, a body called the Indian National Congress was brought into existence in 1885, and held its first session at Bombay. During its early years it owed very much to the friendship and support of certain English champions of Indian progress, among whom may be mentioned particularly Hume, Cotton and Wedderburn. The leading spirits of the new movement displayed no hostility to British rule; but steadily pressed for the application

The  
Indian  
National  
Congress.

to Indian conditions of those principles of democracy and self-government which Western education imparted in the Universities, had now diffused so widely. The Congress stood from the first for an increase in the number of Indians occupying high positions in the administrative structure; and it was noticed by contemporary critics that there was a certain discrepancy between the democratic doctrines put forward by leaders of Indian thought, and the natural tendency of an intellectual aristocracy to demand place and power for itself. Once started, the Indian National Congress steadily acquired a reputation. Educated men from all parts of the country found it possible to meet upon a common platform. For the first time in the history of India, a community of political aspirations provided a strong bond between men of different races. Further, the increased facilities of communication, due to the extension of railways, of roads and of the post and telegraph system, began to break down those barriers of time and space which had in past ages imposed a well nigh insuperable obstacle to the spread of national ideas. On the other hand, it is to be noticed that the Congress was compelled at an early date to recognize the limitations of this new unity. In the political sphere, it was possible to unite men from all parts of India in support of a common programme. But in the sphere of social reform this was not the case. Different social practices current among different communities could not easily be fixed at some common level such as Western ideas would approve. Accordingly, projects of social reform were regrettably but inevitably relegated to the back-ground, since their discussion would have produced discord rather than unity. This characteristic of the Indian National Congress was made the subject of criticism; but it is difficult to see what other line could have been adapted.

In the beginning, the authorities regarded the Indian

**National Congress with a benevolent eye.** Several of those Englishmen, whose unselfish efforts contributed so much to the foundation and progress of this institution, had themselves been officials. Lord Dufferin, at this time

**Attitude  
of the  
Autho-  
rities.**

Viceroy, extended to the Congress his cautious approval. But before long, a change came over the official attitude. Many of the Congress leaders were men of great ability and conspicuous moderation in speech and thought. Nevertheless, they were staunch patriots; and perceiving in the existing system of British rule many features which were indefensible from the point of view of Indian aspirations, they devoted themselves to solid and formidable criticism. Unfortunately, there were also a number of men whose zeal and enthusiasm were more conspicuous than their self-restraint. The combination of these two factors led the deliberations of the Indian National Congress in directions which the authorities could hardly be expected to approve. The fact that the Congress was doing most valuable work in directing attention to the genuine grievances of India, was largely obscured in the official view by the growing volume of formidable and destructive criticism. Lord Dufferin, towards the conclusion of his Viceroyalty, considerably modified his attitude towards the Indian National Congress; and on one occasion at least his strictures upon the institution gave great offence to Indian opinion. But the increasing influence and power of the National Congress inevitably tended to produce its effect upon the ideas of British administrators. Lord Dufferin himself recognized the strength of the Congress opposition. He looked with disfavour on mass meetings and what he called 'incendiary speechifying,' but at the same time admitted that he would feel it a relief if, in the settlement of administrative questions, he 'could rely to a larger extent than at present upon the experience and counsel of Indian co-adjutors'. His Government,

therefore, suggested to the home authorities that there should be an enlargement both of the personnel and of the powers of the central and the local legislatures. He advocated the inclusion in the legislative councils of an element more representative of public opinion; he proposed that the central Legislative Council should be empowered to discuss the annual budget and that the right of interpellation should be given to its members. After a considerable interchange of correspondence between the authorities in India and in England, Lord Dufferin's suggestion was carried into effect. In the time of his successor, Lord Lansdowne, the Indian Councils-Act of 1892 was passed. The object of the Act, as explained by the Under-Secretary of State, was 'to lend official recognition to that remarkable development both of political interest and political capacity that had been visible among higher classes of Indian society since the Government was taken over by the Crown in 1858'. Both the Imperial and the local Legislatures were enlarged; and of the additional Members not more than a fraction were to be officials. Arrangements were made for the nomination of these non-official members by commercial, professional or territorial associations. Chambers of Commerce, Universities, and Landholders' Associations were allowed to recommend their representatives for the approval of Government. The home authorities raised considerable opposition to introducing in a formal manner the elective principle; but the Government of Lord Lansdowne successfully sought power to make rules for the appointment of additional Members which should not preclude some form of election where conditions seemed to demand it. The manner in which the representatives were chosen under the Act of 1892 paved the way for the introduction of the elective principle into Indian politics. And while

Projects  
of  
reform.

The  
Constitu-  
tion of  
1892.

the legislatures, central and provincial, were considerably enlarged and the way prepared for an increase in the democratic element, their functions were correspondingly extended. The Imperial Legislative Council, which had formerly enjoyed the right of discussing measures of new taxation only, was now to have the annual budget laid before it. The right of interpellation was also granted, subject to certain restrictions. It should, however, be noticed that both in the supreme and in the provincial legislatures, the official members were still in the majority.

The reforms of 1892, while far from satisfying Indian aspirations encouraged the progressives to press forward along their chosen road. The Indian National Congress could justly claim that its influence was in a large measure responsible for the new Councils. Further, the spectacle of Indians participating in the higher administrative functions, and taking their seat at the Viceroy's Council Board, acted as a great incentive to young and ambitious patriots who now saw, as it were, opening before them, almost illimitable prospects for the satisfaction of their natural aspirations. Unfortunately, about this time, the claim of Indians to participation in the higher executive positions underwent a set-back. In 1886-87 a Public Services Commission had been appointed to investigate among other things the organization of the Statutory Civil Service which Lord Lytton had set up. As a result of the Commission's recommendations, the Statutory Civil Service was abolished; and the cadres of Government Service were divided between the Indian Civil Service, the Provincial Civil Service, and the Subordinate Service. The Provincial and Subordinate Services shortly came in popular estimation to rank far beneath the Indian Civil Service; and the theory of equality which lay at the basis of the institution of the Statutory Civil Service was tacitly abandoned. From



this time onward, any Indian who desired to rise to high office found himself compelled to enter the Indian Civil Service by the avenue of examinations in London. He no longer found it possible, outside the ranks of that service, to obtain those positions of honour and emolument which had been reserved by Lord Ripon for the Statutory Civil Service. It is from the recommendations of the Public Services Commission, 1886-87, that we can trace the demand, afterwards put forward with increasing emphasis by the Indian National Congress, that the Indian Civil Service examination should be held in India as well as in England. In the year 1893, the House of Commons, in deference to the advocacy of the distinguished Indian Member of Parliament, Dadabhai Naoroji, passed a resolution in favour of the change. But as no steps were taken to embody this expression of opinion in a legislative enactment, nothing was done.

The vigorous growth of the Indian National movement during the Viceroyalty of Lord Lansdowne was in some degree stimulated by financial considerations. A great and world wide decline in the value of silver led to rapid depreciation in the rupee. Since India made large payments to England every year, partly on account of interest on loans required for great constructional projects, partly on account of the pay and pensions of Civil and Military officers, and partly on account of stores purchased in Europe, the fluctuations of exchange produced serious and unexpected deficits. Not only was the Government forced to restrict necessary expenditure on public works ; but in addition it was obliged to resort to further taxation. The indignation of educated India was naturally excited by the spectacle of the apparent financial subordination of India to English vested interests ; too little attention being paid to the fact that the financial misfortunes through which the country was then passing were the product of world-wide forces

rather than of any deliberate design on the part of Great Britain to exploit the Indian people. But the result of these years of stress and difficulty was to strengthen the determination of educated Indians to exercise an effective control over the policy of the Indian Government.

In order to meet the financial obligations now imposed upon the country Government was compelled to levy additional taxation. But since the fall of the rupee continued, it was found necessary to adopt more radical methods. The Govern-

Currency  
Exchange  
and the  
Tariff.

ment of India desired the Home Government to fix a ratio between gold and silver, if possible by international agreement. The Conference held at Brussels at the end of 1892 failed to arrive at a solution; but next year the policy was initiated of closing the Indian Mints to the unrestricted coinage of silver; gold coin or bullion being received in exchange for rupees at the rate of 15 for a sovereign. At first, this expedient failed to produce the desired result; and when Lord Elgin relieved Lord Lansdowne in 1894, the continued fall in exchange again threatened to produce serious deficits. Most unfortunately, the measures taken by Government to restore financial equilibrium were of a character calculated to reinforce the suspicion, which, as we have noticed, was already present in the minds of Indians, that the financial well-being of their country was being subordinated to the interests of England. The Indian Government decided with reluctance to reimpose the old general duty of 5 per cent on all imports. This was a perfectly legitimate step, and could hardly have aroused the objections even of professed free traders; for the tariff was low; and admittedly levied for revenue purposes only. But acting on instructions from home, the Government of India proceeded to exempt cotton goods from the general import rate. There is no reasonable doubt that the political pressure exercised upon the Home Government

by the Lancashire cotton interests was responsible for this lamentable step. India lost the revenue to which she was justly entitled; and Manchester goods secured an indefensible advantage over Indian products. But as the financial difficulties of the Government of India continued, it was found impossible for long to exempt cotton goods from the general tariff. So strong, however, was the feeling in England on behalf of free trade, and so powerful the Lancashire interests, that the Government of India were actually forced by the Home

Government to off-set the inconsiderable protection which the 5 per cent import duty on Manchester goods would have given to the

The  
Cotton  
Excise.

Indian mills, by imposing a countervailing excise duty calculated at the same figure. Indian opinion bitterly resented the excise duty; and held up the policy of favouring Lancashire sentiment on the free trade question as a cynical commentary upon the honesty of British rule. The harm which might have been done to Indian mill-interests by the excise duty was fortunately lessened by the fact that in 1896 both the Import and Excise duties were reduced from 5 to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. But the bitterness of feeling, to which the excise duty gave rise, was not allayed by its comparatively insignificant practical consequences; and the Government of India would have done well to sacrifice an impost, which soon became merely a small item in the revenue, for the sake of the political advantages which they would have reaped. Within the next few years the exchange question lost much of its importance; and the rupee was successfully stabilized at the value of 1s. 4d. As we have already indicated, the real importance of the exchange question lies in the impetus which it afforded to Nationalist sentiment in India. The additional burden of taxation required to meet the home charges, combined with the tariff policy of the authorities, served to convince many Indians that whenever the interests of

Great Britain and of India came to conflict, the latter would be sacrificed to the former. This conviction was important; for it strengthened the element of racial bitterness which was already present, by implication, in discussions of the Indian National Congress.

We must now turn to a brief survey of foreign affairs.

**Foreign  
Affairs.**

During the Viceroyalty of Lord Lansdowne, there was a tendency for the great Powers of Europe to find themselves in conflict upon their Asiatic policy. The recent advances of Russia in Central Asia were bringing the Czar's officers within a measurable distance of the Indian frontier. Further east, France had completed her advance in Indo-China to the line of Mekong; while the British occupation of Upper Burma was a retort to the French attempt to obtain influence in that quarter. In view of the fact that the frontiers of the great Powers were approaching one another more and more closely, the statesmen of the time, in their desire to prevent international friction and possible conflict, devised the plan of surrounding the Asiatic possessions of the great Powers with belts of territory commonly called 'spheres of influence.' Within these 'spheres' the country was not administered by the Power whose frontiers were adjacent; but no aggression was permitted from without. Lord Lansdowne did his best to surround the Indian frontier at all vulnerable points with such 'spheres of influence.' On the north-eastern frontiers, British Protectorates were extended to the people of Sikkim, to the Lushais north-east of Chittagong, to the Shan States of Upper Burma, while some other peoples were brought within the British sphere. On the north-west frontier, matters were not so easily settled. The personal relations between Lord Lansdowne and the great Amir Abdurrahman were somewhat cool; while the Afghan authorities became increasingly alarmed at the foreign policy of the Government of India. It was in Lord Lansdowne's time

that the problem presented by the independent tribes on the north-west frontier came prominently to the fore. These tribes inhabited the belt of territory between the dominions of the Amir and British India. They devoted a large portion of their energies to raiding the peaceful inhabitants of frontier districts; and from time to time, punitive expeditions had to be despatched against them by the Indian Government. In theory, these tribes owed allegiance to the Amir. In practice, he was unable to control them and very jealous of any attempt on the part of the British to do so. He was, in fact, whether consciously or unconsciously, applying the principle of the sphere of influence to the territory between himself and the British. On the side of the Indian Government, much thought was devoted to the proper policy to be pursued regarding these frontier tribes. Their raiding was always troublesome; and frequently quite intolerable; while the punitive expeditions organized against them had only temporary effect. One section of thought, generally known as the 'forward school,' demanded the fixing of a definite Afghan-British Frontier, and the subjugation of all the tribes on the British side of the line. The opponents of the 'forward school' reiterated that the cost of carrying out of such a policy would be prohibitive; and that the Afghan authorities would be irretrievably offended. They argued that it would be better to retire to some convenient strategic line beyond the reach of the frontier tribes, and to abandon all attempts to introduce order or security into tribal territory. We may notice that the foreign policy of the Indian Government has tended to vary from time to time according as one school of opinion or the other obtained the temporary predominance. In the time of Lord Lansdowne, the 'forward school' came gradually to the front. Care was taken to respect, so far as possible, the susceptibilities of the Amir Adburrahman; but there

North-  
West  
Frontier  
Policy.

was a certain activity up and down the British side of the frontier; a railway was completed up to the Bolan Pass; English officers were sent to Gilgit, and from Gilgit to Chitral. Abdurrahman became uneasy, and for some time there was risk of a rupture. Fortunately, good sense prevailed on either side, and a Commission was appointed under Sir Mortimer Durand to delimit the frontier between Afghan and British territory. The disputed points were thoroughly investigated; and an agreement signed. The British ceded certain districts to the Amir who, in return, renounced his right to interfere in Swat, Bajur, Dir and Chitral. Wherever possible an actual boundary line was to be demarcated by Afghan and British officers, while the Amir engaged not to interfere in future with the tribes upon the British side of the line. Abdurrahman was permitted to import the munitions of war; and was allowed an increased subsidy.

But though the differences between the British and Afghanistan were thus satisfactorily settled, it remained to secure the obedience of the frontier tribes. The tribes were unquestionably alarmed by the inclusion of Chitral within the British sphere of influence. In 1895, when the then Mehtar of Chitral was assassinated, the British Political Agent was besieged in the capital. Relief expeditions forced their way through the Malakand Pass and over the Shandu Pass from Gilgit. Lord Elgin, now Governor-General, advised that Chitral should be retained as part of British territory; but the Liberal Government of Lord Rosebery decided that justice demanded the evacuation of the country. When Lord Salisbury and the Unionists came into power, he reversed this decision; authorizing the construction of military roads from Chitral to the British frontier. A fierce controversy arose in England, which was largely embittered by party spirit, upon the question as to

Frontier  
Affairs,  
1895—  
Present  
Day.

whether the retention of Chitral within the British sphere of influence was or was not justifiable. This, Chitral.

however, is of less importance than the alarm which British operations in Chitral aroused among the frontier tribes. Several recent manifestations of the forward policy had begun to excite the susceptibilities of the wild borderers. Roads and Railways were being constructed; British outposts were being pushed forward; and the boundary line between the Afghan and the British spheres was being fixed. British interference in Chitral appeared to confirm the suspicions to which these activities had given birth. Accordingly, in 1897, the frontier tribes declared a holy war against the British. The Afridi clans closed the Khyber Pass; the Mohmands raided the country round Peshawar; while, fierce onslaughts were launched on British posts in other localities. Two distinct campaigns were necessary to subdue the tribal insurrection. The Mohmands were compelled to submit at the beginning of 1898 by the operations of the Malakand Field Force. The second campaign was conducted in the Tirah Valley, which forms part of the Afridi country south-west of Peshawar. The country is very difficult; and the British forces

suffered severe losses. But the tribes were Tirah. unable to continue the struggle for very long; and when another invasion was threatened in the spring of 1898, they made their submission and paid the fines imposed upon them.

It will be convenient in this place briefly to sketch the history of affairs on the north-west frontier from the time of the Tirah expedition to the present day.

The delimitation of the Afghan frontier by the Durand Commission had resulted in dividing the tribal area between the Afghans and the British; but except in Baluchistan, the British Government did not actually administer the country up to the point where the Amir's

Frontier  
Policy:  
Lord Elgin  
and Lord  
Curzon.

territory began. Elsewhere, there was an intermediate belt, which, including Waziristan and the country north of the Gumal River, was the dwelling place of fierce tribes who had been accustomed from time immemorial to raid their more peaceful neighbours. The defence of the British border was in the hands of the Punjab Government, which had a special frontier force at its disposal; but raids continued unceasingly; and punitive expeditions produced only a temporary relief. The authorities were still hesitating between the 'forward' and 'backward' schools of frontier policy; with the result that while the tribes were not firmly handled, they were subject to the perpetual irritation of small British posts within their territory. When at the beginning of 1899 Lord Elgin was succeeded by Lord Curzon, the whole frontier policy was subjected to careful revision. In order to secure uniformity of action and consistency of design, the new Viceroy created the North-West Frontier Province, administered by a Chief

Commissioner directly responsible to the Government of India. This scheme, which deprived the Punjab Government, so long the honourable defender of the Indian border, of all further control over frontier policy was naturally resented at the time. There can, however, be little doubt that the task of administering the frontier tribes is too heavy for any Government organized upon ordinary provincial lines. So that Lord Curzon's experiment is unlikely to be reversed. But criticism has also been directed against the manner in which the new province was carved out of the Punjab; and within the last few years it has been suggested that the more settled and peaceful districts of the North-West Frontier Province might well be re-amalgamated with the Punjab; while the dangerous and exposed frontier districts should continue to be controlled by a Chief Commissioner under the Government of India:

Creation  
of N.W.F.  
Province.



Having by this administrative change secured the possibility of executing a consistent frontier policy, Lord Curzon commenced to settle the affairs of the tribes upon a more satisfactory basis. His main principle was the withdrawal of regular troops from advanced posts in tribal territory, and their replacement by tribal levies with British officers. These levies provided honourable employment for those daring spirits who had hitherto lived by raiding; while the tribe as a whole became responsible for the peace and order of its own territory. The withdrawal of regular forces to positions outside tribal territory conciliated opposition; and the new levies soon proved themselves efficient in checking local raids. An elaborate system of communications was established in the rear, which enabled regular forces to exert pressure in the time of need. While general peace persisted on the border, this policy of Lord Curzon proved itself a success. North of the Gumal River, where the tribes are comparatively compact, and the authority of the tribal chiefs generally acknowledged, the scheme encountered few difficulties. The British Government enhanced the prestige of the Chiefs by pay and allowances of various kinds; and by making them responsible for the good behaviour of their tribesmen gradually enlisted local sentiment upon the side of law and order. But in Waziristan, where there was little tribal cohesion, Lord Curzon's policy did not meet with the same success. It was found impossible suitably to increase the authority of the tribal chieftains; while the wildness of the country and the savagery of the inhabitants proved a serious obstacle to peaceful progress. Further south, in Baluchistan, where conditions approximated more closely to those of the northern tribes, conditions were again satisfactory, but Waziristan remained and still remains the danger point of the frontier.

The arrangements initiated by Lord Curzon, while they operated fairly well in times of peace, have been proved

by experience not altogether suitable to sustain the burden of unsettled conditions. During the Great War, the tribes up and down the frontier were disturbed by alarming rumours of various kinds; and the Mahsuds and Wazirs of Waziristan became particularly active in their raids. On an average, every four years their repeated misdeeds have necessitated active operations of major or minor importance against them. The country has thus never enjoyed a fair chance of settling down. When the third Afghan War broke out in 1919, the system of local levies, which was in use up and down the border, was subjected to a severe strain; and under the influence of religion, large numbers of men deserted to the Afghans with their arms and ammunition. Mahsud and Wazir depredations became more intolerable than ever. When peace was signed with Afghanistan, the British Government found themselves compelled to take stock of the whole frontier position. The first problem was that of Waziristan. The hopes that if the inhabitants of this turbulent region were left alone they would leave British India alone, had proved entirely fallacious. They refused the lenient terms offered them by the British Government; and seemed determined to persist in raiding. In 1920 as a result of punitive operations, British troops were firmly established in the heart of the Mahsud country. But the effective occupation of this territory up to the border line would call for resources in men and money which India can ill spare. In consequence, it has been determined that regular troops are not to be stationed in Waziristan; but are to exercise supervision from the two outside posts of Manzai and Razmak, which effectively control the country. At the same time, roads are being driven through territory hitherto impenetrable, and endeavours are being made to improve the fertility of the area in such a fashion as to enable the tribesmen to live without raiding.

The unsatisfactory behaviour of a certain number of local levies both in Waziristan and elsewhere, has determined the Government of India to modify Lord Curzon's system. In place of the former local levies, who were provided with arms by the Indian Government and drilled somewhat on the lines of regular regiments, two forces have been set up. The first are scouts, who, though locally recruited, are under the ordinary military discipline of a regiment; and the second are Khassadars, who provide their own arms and equipment and carry out the duties of armed police in return for a monthly wage. The Khassadars, whose living depends upon the proper performance of their limited duties, have far less temptation than had the tribal levies to desert to an enemy in case of war: for the levies, who were as a rule unsupported by regular troops: who had Government arms in their hands and who had to sustain an undue weight of responsibility upon their shoulders, were naturally inclined, when disturbances broke out on a large scale, to adopt, with profit to themselves, the life of free-booters. The new policy which has been introduced since 1920 has yet to be tested; but it seems possible that a greater degree of civilization may at length be achieved in Waziristan by the opening up of this inaccessible region to trade and commerce through the policy of road construction.

The relations between the Indian Government and the tribes on this side of the Durand line are intimately connected with the friendliness, or the reverse, of the Amir of Afghanistan. The tribes under the control of this ruler are allied by kinship and faith to the tribes in the British sphere of influence; and if the tribes on the Afghan side of the border become disturbed, those on the Indian side may readily follow suit. Shortly after the demarcation of the Durand line, Amir

New  
Policy.

Afghan-  
British  
relations,  
1892 to  
Present  
Day.

Abdurrahman carried his sway remorselessly into tribal territory, with the result that he extended his authority right up to the British zone. As we have already seen, a corresponding step was never taken by the Indian Government, partly on the score of expense, and partly because public opinion, which is never a factor that can be neglected by the Indian authorities, would not have sanctioned the drastic measures which the Amir was able, with little trouble to himself to execute. Throughout the reign of Amir Abdurrahman, Afghanistan continued strong and united under his terrible sway. His relations with the British were consistently cordial; although the susceptibilities of his people prevented him from seeking close amity. In 1901, he was peaceably succeeded by his son Habibullah, who, though less able than his great father, was a man of no ordinary strength of character. But the long-continued peace between Afghanistan and India, combined with the gradual pacification of many frontier districts through Lord Curzon's policy, seriously disturbed that party in Afghanistan which is always apprehensive of British designs, and always ready to raise the standard of a Holy War. Amir Habibullah had, therefore, to walk warily; and his relations with the Government of India became for a time less cordial. But both the Indian Government and the Amir, being sincerely anxious for the maintenance of good relations, found little difficulty in coming to an understanding. The Amir was conceded the title of 'His Majesty'; and the annual subsidy was regularly paid him by the Government of India.

In 1907 a very important stage was reached in the relations between India and Afghanistan, as a result of the Anglo-Russian convention which was signed in that year. This convention was designed in the first place to apply to Persian affairs. We should notice that for a long time British statesmen have been agreed that the

**Effect of  
the Anglo-  
Russian  
Conven-  
tion, 1907.**

exercise of political control over the Persian Gulf by any foreign power is a menace to the security of India ; and in 1903 Lord Lansdowne had to make a very important declaration to the effect that Great Britain would regard the establishment of a foreign power on the shores of islands of the Gulf as an unfriendly act. The first decade of the twentieth century coincided with the beginning of Germany's Imperialistic designs in the east ; and the project for the Berlin-Baghdad Railway was alarming from the standpoint of India's security. Great Britain's interest in the Persian Gulf almost inevitably inclined her to watch affairs in South Persia with the greatest care. Persia itself was in confusion at the time ; and the advance of Russian influence from the north and of British influence from the south seemed likely during one period to threaten the unhappy country with political extinction. The great powers of the West were less concerned with this possibility than with the prospect that the relations between Great Britain and Russia might suffer through the antagonism of their interests on Persian soil. Both England and Russia were at this time disturbed by Germany's 'peaceful penetration' of Turkey, and it was found possible to arrange for an agreement by which North Persia was regarded as falling under the political influence of Russia ; and South Persia as falling within England's sphere ; Central Persia being kept a neutral zone between. Great Britain has often been blamed for cynically contributing to the confusion and trouble which had fallen upon Persia within recent years ; but it is only fair to remember that but for the 1907 agreement, Persia would almost certainly have been annexed bodily by Russia. The recognition of British interests in Persia, together with the demarcation of a sphere within which Russian ambitions might not penetrate had at least this good effect ; Persia was respite from imminent dissolution until the time when

her recent national awakening gave her a chance of establishing once more her unity.

The Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907 was of importance not merely in relation to Persia, but also in regard to Afghanistan. **Fears Removed.** Russia definitely recognized the independence of the Amir's Government in internal affairs. From this time onwards, until the Great War and the Russian Revolution of 1917 destroyed the previous settlement, Russia made no attempt to interfere with Afghanistan, and displayed the utmost respect both for Afghan and Indian susceptibilities. In consequence, the relations between Afghanistan and India grew extremely cordial; and during the first years of the Great War, the Amir Habibullah preserved a careful neutrality of a kind which was extremely valuable to the Allies. He restrained in very large degree the natural tendency of the independent tribes to profit by the difficulties of the Government of India; and he successfully controlled the aggressive party within his own dominions. Unfortunately, his friendship with Great Britain gave rise to a series of intrigues against him, one of which led to his assassination in 1919. His young successor, the present Amir Amanullah Khan found himself confronted by internal difficulties so grave that the only chance of establishing his position seemed to lie in the conduct of a successful war. He, therefore, suddenly embarked on hostilities with the Indian Government, concerning whose strength and preparedness he was utterly misled. Within four months he was disillusioned; and received terms so lenient that Afghan opinion was enabled to regard the campaign as an Afghan victory. Neighbourly relations have once more been established; while the independence of Afghanistan in external as well as in internal affairs is now acknowledged by Great Britain.

The third region to which the Anglo-Russian agreement applied was Tibet. The relations between India

and this remote and inaccessible area began towards the end of the eighteenth century ; when the East Tibet.

India Company, endeavoured to open up trade with the interior. But the system of Government in vogue in Tibet, combined with the conservatism of the inhabitants, served to thwart the ideas of those who favoured closer intercourse. The Government of the country is a theocracy, at the head of which are two Lamas, nominally equal in power, the Dalai Lama of Lhasa and the Teshu Lama of Teshilhunpo. There is an Executive Council and a National Assembly ; but the predominantly conservative influence of the great monasteries is supreme. At the time when British Agents sought to penetrate the country, Tibet had for some decades been under the suzerainty of China, two Chinese resident officials controlling the policy of the Tibetan Government. For roughly a century after Warren Hastings' time, the land of Tibet remained unknown. But the extension of the British Protectorate over Sikkim led to boundary disputes with the Tibetans. The British Government took up the matter with China, under whose sovereignty Tibet nominally lay, and in 1890, a Convention was concluded settling the boundary dispute and providing for a Commission to discuss the possibility of frontier trade. Nothing, however, resulted from the Convention, because the Tibetans disliked the prospect of intercourse with the outside world ; and the Chinese authorities were apathetical.

In Lord Curzon's time the question of the relations between Tibet and India assumed a new importance, on account of the growth of a Chinese Influence. Tibetan National movement. Chinese suzerainty had for some time been unpopular ; and the gradual decay of the Central Government at Peking seemed to offer a prospect of independence. Moreover, the ruling Dalai Lama had contrived, for the first time for many generations, to free himself from the tutelage

of the aristocracy'.<sup>1</sup> In his impending struggle against difficulties, external and internal, he sought the aid of Russia. Lord Curzon, who feared the consequences of a consolidation of Russian influence over Tibet, pressed the British Government to allow a Mission to be sent. A pretext was found in the encroachment of the Tibetans upon the Sikkim frontier; and a mission was despatched under Colonel Younghusband. The mission advanced in November, 1903, but the Tibetan authorities refused to meet it, and collected troops to expel the intruders. A skirmish occurred, after which the British forces entered Lhasa in August, 1904. The Dalai Lama fled to Mongolia; and a treaty was concluded between the Regent and the British. The Tibetans undertook to surrender the Chumbi Valley as security for the payment of an indemnity of 75 lakhs; trade-marts were to be established in suitable positions; and Great Britain's influence over the foreign policy of Tibet was assured. But in concluding these terms, Colonel Younghusband had gone much further than the British Government had empowered him. Accordingly, the occupation of the Chumbi Valley was reduced from 75 years to 3 years; the indemnity was diminished by two-thirds; the British direction of Tibetan foreign policy was tacitly abandoned. The expedition had been brilliantly managed; but it is difficult to pronounce it justifiable. One unexpected consequence ensued therefrom; the Tibetan national movement received a temporary set-back owing to the misfortunes which had overtaken the Dalai Lama; and the Chinese Government re-established its authority more effectively than had been the case before. The Younghusband expedition failed in its main object of opening up trade between India and Tibet, for the simple reason that the hostility of the Tibetans proved an insuperable obstacle to commercial intercourse. The later history of Indo-Tibetan relations is interesting, and may be briefly summarized. When Lord Minto was



Viceroy, and Mr. Morley, Secretary of State, Great Britain and China concluded a convention at Peking in 1906 under which the former power bound herself not to annex Tibet, while the latter engaged to impose corresponding restrictions upon the ambitions of other countries. Next year, the Anglo-Russian Convention settled the integrity of Tibetan territory, binding both Great Britain and Russia to trade with Tibet only through the Chinese and to send no emissaries to Lhasa. The Chinese, being thus given a free hand in the country, proceeded to rule it somewhat drastically. As a result, there was a certain reaction of feeling in Tibet in favour of Great Britain. In 1910, the Dalai Lama fled to India in order to escape the Chinese troops despatched against him, and sought the assistance of the Indian Government. This assistance was not, of course, forthcoming; but in January, 1911, the Tibetans revolted against Chinese rule, slew or expelled the Chinese garrisons and enabled the Dalai Lama to return to his capital. Next year the Chinese Government at Peking seemed on the point of making warlike preparations against Tibet; but the British Government clearly showed their unwillingness to permit the subjugation of the Tibetans or their reduction to the position of vassals. Accordingly, in 1913-14, Tibetan and Chinese delegates came to an agreement, in conferences held at Simla and Delhi, as a result of which Tibet now enjoys internal autonomy; while the recent troubles in China have rendered Chinese suzerainty more nominal than ever. It is interesting to notice that the Dalai Lama offered armed assistance to the British on the outbreak of the Great War and ordered prayers for the success of the Allies to be offered throughout Tibet.

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## CHAPTER III

### India in the Twentieth Century

WE must now take up the thread of internal affairs, which for the last few pages we have dropped.

**Lord Elgin.**

Lord Elgin's administration was, on the whole, a time of prosperity, although, as we have seen, the fall in exchange straitened the finances of the Indian Government and led to consequences which excited bitter feeling on the part of the Indian Nationalist party. This feeling was further influenced by the troubles which darkened the later years of Lord Elgin's Viceroyalty. In 1896 a terrible famine occurred, such as had not been known for the last twenty years. In the preceding season, the rains had been deficient; now they failed almost completely. Despite the

**Famine and Plague.**

efforts of the authorities to organize relief, and the elaborate machinery set up under the Famine Code of 1883, it is calculated that the deaths in British territory alone amounted to nearly three quarters of a million. On the other hand, but for the action of the authorities, the results would have been infinitely more terrible; for early in 1897 no fewer than four million people were receiving relief. Unluckily, this catastrophe did not stand alone; for in August 1896, Bubonic Plague made its appearance in Bombay. This pestilence had been known in India for many centuries; but had not raged on any extensive scale since the year 1616, when the Emperor Jehangir described in his 'Memoirs' its symptoms and the havoc it caused through the north-west of India. Sporadic outbreaks occurred in 1703 and 1704 in the Deccan; Cutch and Sind were visited in 1812, and in 1836, the disease was widely prevalent in Rajputana. But the

new outbreak, which commenced in Bombay in 1896, was far more severe than these sporadic occurrences; and the Government quickly perceived the necessity for vigorous action. Unfortunately, in planning their anti-plague measures, the authorities did not take into account the prejudices of the population in regard to caste and *pardah*. The sanitary measures dictated by Western systems of medicine were somewhat too ruthlessly enforced; with the result that a great outburst of popular feeling blazed up against the whole campaign. This feeling was partly the result of a genuine failure to understand the action of the authorities, and partly a consequence of the machinations of interested persons. A movement was set on foot to resist by force the plague work; and certain unbalanced young men were misled into assassinating two British Officers. Serious riots, moreover, broke out in Bombay. By 1898 the authorities had abandoned as impracticable the more drastic recommendations of their medical advisers; and were from henceforth concerned principally with the task of keeping the epidemic under control. But the anti-plague policy of the authorities had brought them into serious unpopularity among classes little concerned with politics; while at the same time it played into the hands of those who for one reason or another disliked British rule. Indeed, it is from the time when the authorities attempted, in their honest efforts to combat the plague, a widespread interference with the habits and susceptibilities of the people of certain parts of India, that we may date the rise of the anarchist movement. The spectacle of the enforcement, of what seemed callous and arbitrary regulations, with the help of British troops, acted as an intolerable provocation to high-spirited young students, whose minds had been formed upon the literature of Western freedom and who were much attracted by the gospel of Nihilism at this time in vogue in intellectual

**Political  
Effects.**

circles in Europe. Unfortunately, the authorities with all their efforts, were unable to check the spread of plague; and incredible as it now seems, the ravages of the disease were ascribed by unscrupulous persons to the deliberate design of the British Government. When Lord Curzon succeeded Lord Elgin in 1899, he found India in a somewhat disturbed condition.

**Lord Curzon.** Plague and pestilence were afflicting the population; the provision of famine relief had placed a severe burden upon the administrative system; there was a general tendency, even on the part of the 'moderate' intellectuals to blame the British Government for all the misfortunes which had come upon the country. Fortunately, the finances began to improve. The closing of the mints to the free coinage of silver was now serving to relieve the consequences of unstable exchange; and from 1899 onwards the Indian budget began to show surpluses. When the terrible famine of 1899-1900 occurred, the authorities found it possible to expend over six million sterling in relief works and to grant considerable remissions of revenue. Further, within the next two years the Salt Tax was reduced to a lower figure than had been known since the mutiny.

The financial surpluses, combined with the misfortunes which plague and famine had brought on the people of India, naturally attracted the attention of critics to the question of the land settlement. It was freely stated at this time that the frequent occurrence of famines was due rather to the policy of the Government in over-assessing the ryots than to any failure of the rains. That such a view is much exaggerated was proved by Lord Curzon's resolution in 1902; in which it was demonstrated that the Central Provinces alone had suffered, through drought, within a period of seven years—a financial loss equal to the whole land revenue for half a century. It was, therefore, obvious that no remissions of land

**Cause of Famines.**

revenue could have made a perceptible difference. It is indeed impossible to deny that the principal cause of famines in India is a cycle of unfavourable seasons; which in certain circumstances produces natural catastrophes of such magnitude that the best efforts of human agency are comparatively impotent. But we may notice that the growth of internal communications, the extension of irrigation works, and the increasing perfection of the policy of famine relief, have now provided India with more efficient palliatives to serious monsoon failure than she has ever known before.

While it would be a mistake, therefore, to hold that the land revenue system of Government was responsible for the outbreaks of famine which marked the end of the nineteenth and the early decades of the twentieth century, no reasonable person will deny that the administration of the land revenue was far from perfect. Over-rigorous collections; hasty enhancements of the assessment; too mechanical a system in the collection of revenue—all these tended to press hardly upon the cultivator. Lord Curzon, whose attention was prominently directed to the defects of the land revenue system, endeavoured to ameliorate the condition of the Indian peasantry. He increased the period of settlement; he arranged for gradual instead of sudden enhancements in cases where the assessment was raised; and allowed the Government demand to vary according to the character of the season. He further placed the Indian people under a deep debt of gratitude by establishing the co-operative movement, which has now attained such large proportions, and is exercising so admirable an influence upon the rural economy of India. Further, he founded the Imperial Department of Agriculture, which, with its Research Institutes, its experimental farms, and its army of demonstrators, has done so much to place

Land  
Revenue  
Reforms.

Lord  
Curzon's  
Work for  
Rural  
India.

improved methods of tillage and improved strains of seed and stock at the disposal of the Indian ryot. In Lord Curzon's time also a great extension of the railway system took place, nearly six thousand miles of new line being constructed. As a result, fresh sections of the country were opened up to trade and commerce, intercourse was encouraged, and a great stimulus afforded to economic life. Nor had the necessity for irrigation works escaped the attention of the authorities. Hitherto, while enterprises of considerable magnitude had been planned and executed by Government, there had been no real plan of systematic development. To Lord Curzon belongs the credit of laying down an ordered scheme for the extension of irrigation, regular provision for its finance, and a time-table for its steady prosecution. It was symptomatic of the Viceroy's interest in the material prosperity of the country that he established a new ~~Department of Commerce and Industry, under the charge of the sixth Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council.~~ A more disputable step was the passing of the Punjab Land Alienation Act in 1900, which was designed to prevent the holding of a cultivator from being sold in execution of a court decree. This measure was an attempt to obviate the tendency—at this time increasingly apparent—of land passing from the hands of the cultivators into those of money-lenders, shopkeepers, and professional men. But the difficulty of working such a provision has been proved by experience to be very great; there has been much evasion; and the hostility of the professional classes has been aroused.

The restless zeal and unconquerable energy characterizing Lord Curzon's regime were rarely exhibited to better advantage than in his drastic overhauling of the whole machinery of administration. He personally investigated the operations of many departments of Government; he

Adminis-  
trative  
Reforms.

introduced far-reaching changes into the procedure of the Secretariat; he swept away abuses; he raised the standards of efficiency. The inevitable result of this procedure was to increase the concentration of authority in the Secretariats, a step bitterly resented by some of the members of the administrative services. But on the whole it cannot be denied that Lord Curzon's reforms in procedure were salutary as well as far-reaching. In two other directions, the benefit of the changes which he introduced was obvious even at the time. First, he appointed a Commission to enquire into the Police Service; and, impressed by the unsatisfactory state of affairs which investigation revealed, he carried through in 1905 a number of important reforms which pointed the way towards diminished corruption and enhanced efficiency. In the second place, Lord Curzon personally interested himself in the occasional failure of the Courts to bring adequately to justice European offenders who had been guilty of maltreating their Indian domestics. His fearless championship of the cause of the helpless brought upon him great unpopularity from certain ill-informed sections of European opinion.

Broadly speaking, in the actions which we have already described, Lord Curzon enjoyed the support of the moderate party among Indian politicians. But his autocratic demeanour and uncompromising determination brought him before long into conflict with them also. After himself devoting much study and attention to the question of Indian education, he appointed a Commission under Sir Thomas Raleigh to report upon the educational structure. Most unfortunately, this Commission contained no representative of Indian opinion; and was in addition preponderatingly official in its composition. The Report proved to be a severe stricture upon the educational condition of India. It was stated therein that the process of 'filtration,' upon which the ideas of

Educational  
Work.

1854 had been founded, had failed to materialize ; in other words, the education obtained by the upper classes at the Universities had remained confined, as

**Defects of the Existing System.** it were, in a water-tight compartment, without filtering down to the lower social strata. As

a result, primary and secondary education had derived very little benefit from the considerable sums expended upon University education ; while the network of vernacular schools which, as we have noticed, had in old times extended over so wide an area, had been suffered to decay. A modern educationist, perusing the report of Lord Curzon's University Commission, would inevitably draw the conclusion that the main reason for the then unsatisfactory character of the Indian Universities was the absence of any sound structure of secondary and primary education, through which a proper pre-University training could be acquired by students. The Universities themselves needed reform ; but their more serious shortcomings were not to be met by any internal modifications. The real remedy lay in a progressive reform of the lower stages of Indian education, in order to provide a solid foundation upon which University instruction could be erected. But Lord Curzon and his advisers were obsessed by the internal shortcomings of the Indian Universities. It was accordingly to the modification of University machinery that they directed most of their attention. Now, as we have seen, the Indian Universities had been constructed on the model of the unreformed University of London. The Senates, composed of Fellows appointed for life, had gradually grown large, and now included many persons who had no direct interest in, or knowledge of, education. The work of the Universities was practically confined to the organization and conduct of examinations ; and since the Governing Bodies were largely freed from all control on the part of the State, they had become strongholds of vested interests. For some time



able Indians had been demanding reform. Mr. Gokhale, in particular, urged the necessity of making the Universities teaching bodies in the real sense of the term; of increasing the salaries of the College professors; and of importing the best available men from Europe. By these means he hoped that the University system of India would gradually be raised to a thoroughly satisfactory standard. But Lord Curzon, with his

usual dislike of delay and passion for efficiency, began his reform at what we can now see to have been the wrong end. He

aimed at remodelling the Universities by the direct intervention of the State. Accordingly, the Senates were reduced to a uniform strength of one hundred members, of whom no fewer than eighty were to be Government nominees. At the same time, a strict control was instituted over schools and colleges; regulations were drawn up for the conduct of the Managing Bodies; and the rules for conferring recognition were made much more stringent. The result of all this was very unfortunate. Large numbers of Indian public men were in sympathy with Lord Curzon's desire to reform the Universities and improve the structure of Indian education; but they bitterly opposed the steps which he took for the achievement of these ends. In whatever manner reform had been carried out, there would have been some outcry on the part of vested interests; but had Lord Curzon framed his policy with greater regard to the advice tendered to him by leaders of Indian opinion, he would have secured a solid measure of support from the more enlightened men. It must, indeed, be admitted that his educational reforms were to some extent salutary. He swept away abuses; he created a structure which, so far as the Universities were concerned, was within its limited scope efficient. But he did not go to the roots of the matter; and the work had to be done all over again by Sir Michael Sadler's

**Lord  
Curzon's  
Mistake.**

Commission in the time of Lord Chelmsford. This time, it was done well; and the great Report of the Calcutta University Commissioners, who comprised Indian and English educationists of the highest standing, has begun a new and brighter era in the history of Indian education. From the broader standpoint of politics, Lord Curzon's educational reforms were quite as unsatisfactory. The benefits derived therefrom were far less than would have been the case had the Viceroy been content to work more slowly and more surely. Worse than all, the pursuit of his educational policy represented the beginning of a serious divergence between the Viceroy and representatives of educated India, who were irritated by what they regarded as his headstrong and impatient settlement of questions very dear to their hearts.

Lord Curzon's term of office would normally have expired in April, 1904; but his achievements in many directions had been so striking that Lord Curzon's Extension. he was reappointed for a further period. He returned to England for a few months' rest, while Lord Ampthill, the Governor of Madras, held office during his absence. In December, 1904, Lord Curzon returned. Two great problems presented themselves for settlement, out of which arose controversies which brought his brilliant Viceroyalty to an embittered termination.

The first problem which Lord Curzon set himself to solve on his return was that of the partition of Bengal. From the administrative point of view, it had become impossible for one Lieutenant-Governor adequately to satisfy the needs of a population of 78 millions. Accordingly, the less prosperous and more remote parts of the province, particularly those on the east of the Ganges, had suffered; internal communications were bad; law and order were maintained only with the utmost difficulty. After a considerable amount of careful examination, Lord Curzon

satisfied himself that it was necessary to constitute a new Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. Here again, as in the matter of University reform, he came to grief through failing sufficiently to consider Indian opinion. There can be little doubt that some such step as that which he proposed was demanded by the interests of the people of Eastern Bengal. It is obvious, also, that any 'partition' would, even under the most favourable circumstances, offend formidable vested interests. But the manner in which the partition was planned deeply affronted the growing sense of Bengali nationality. Bengal has, for a long period, enjoyed a community of culture and of language; and in the course of the nineteenth century, a vigorous national life had sprung up. Bengalis had taken the lead in many patriotic

endeavours: the standards of literary achievement and of culture were higher than in other provinces: a powerful educated middle class animated by democratic ideas and national aspirations, had firmly consolidated its claim to the direction of public opinion. The growing strength of the Bengali national sentiment was evidenced by a brilliant literary and artistic renaissance, to which the famous Tagore family greatly contributed. The Calcutta University and the Calcutta Bar were the acknowledged leaders of Indian political thought in certain directions: the press was powerful, and directed by men of such outstanding ability as Mr. (later Sir) Surendranath Banerjee. Into this atmosphere, surcharged with provincial pride and patriotic emotion, Lord Curzon's decision fell like a thunderbolt. That certain interested persons served their own ends by exaggerating the practical consequences of the partition, cannot be denied: but it was the utter failure of the Administration to consider popular susceptibilities, which lay at the root of the fierce and widespread agitation that shortly broke out. Lord Curzon persisted in his chosen

Bengali  
Sentiment  
Affronted.

Agitation.

course; and the partition was carried through in 1905. It remained in force for five years, after which time it was modified by the changes consequent on the transference of the capital of India from Calcutta to Delhi. Very little damage appears to have been done to the cause of Bengali nationality; the needs of the inhabitants of Eastern Bengal and Assam were unquestionably much better looked after than under the previous regime. But the importance of the partition episode is considerable. As in the case of the Ilbert Bill, it showed conclusively that Indian opinion was in the last resort unable to deflect the Government of India from pursuing a particular course of action. The agitation carried on in connection with Lord Curzon's measure, particularly among students, provided fresh fuel for the discontent now characterizing Indian national feeling. The point

The Real Issue.

which appealed to so many educated Indians, whatever might be their precise shade of political ambition, was the spectacle of a great and widespread movement of protest utterly failing to produce any result. Indeed, looking back upon Lord Curzon's action from the standpoint of the years which have intervened, we can see that the importance of the partition of Bengal does not reside in the question as to whether Lord Curzon was right or wrong, so much as in the fact that he ignored and overrode a formidable outcry on the part of the Indian public. His cavalier treatment of the widespread movement of protest marked the beginning of a new and more formidable phase of nationalist activity.

Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty was brought to an end as a result of his disagreement with Lord Kitchener, at this time Commander-in-Chief, upon the question as to whether the Commander-in-Chief should be the sole adviser of the Viceroy in the matters of military administration. The dispute was referred to Home Government; which

Differences with Lord Kitchener.

suggested that while the Commander-in-Chief should exclusively control the strictly military departments, there should continue to be a Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council in charge of certain cognate branches. But as the Home Government did not endorse Lord Curzon's nomination for the new Membership, the Viceroy resigned in August, 1905. His term of office, as will be realized even from the brief summary which is all that can be furnished in this book, had been most remarkable in its achievements. The only previous

Governor-General who can be compared to Lord Curzon's is Lord Dalhousie. But the student of Vice-royalty.

history may find it interesting to remember that in each case, a Vicerealty characterized by restless energy and unusual achievement was followed by a dangerous movement of unrest. To Lord Dalhousie there succeeded the mutiny; to Lord Curzon the manifold disturbances and dangerous agitations of the next few years. But while not overlooking the troubles which arose, in each case, from a failure adequately to consider Indian opinion, we must not fail to recognize the high and noble ideals which animated Lord Curzon equally with Lord Dalhousie. Both men were much handicapped by ill-health and by domestic sorrow, but their dauntless spirit overrode all difficulties. Both laboured wholeheartedly for the good of the people of India as they saw it. Both made serious mistakes through their impatience and through their failure adequately to consider the point of view of men less able than themselves. Both accomplished much that is great and that will endure; both might have accomplished infinitely more had they been content to advance more cautiously and with a greater regard for the prejudices and predilections of the governed.

Lord Curzon's departure corresponded with the advent to power in England of the Liberal Party, which now

found itself in a position of commanding influence owing to its recent overwhelming success at the polls. Mr. John Morley, the new Secretary of State for India, was determined to apply the progressive principles of his party to Indian Constitutional reform. He was fortunate in the Viceroy with whom he had to work. Lord Minto, great grandson of the Governor-General who had held office from 1807 to 1813, had enjoyed a life of varied experiences in high official position. He was shrewd and kindly, with a great knowledge of human nature and an eye for the realities of any situation. He was well-fitted to afford wise counsel to the somewhat doctrinaire Secretary of State, whose personal autocracy, particularly in small matters, manifested an inconvenient contrast to his liberal principles. The joint administration of the two men was eminently successful. The frank correspondence which passed between them is of great interest to the historian ; for it reveals at once the difficulties of the situation they were called upon to face, and the perpetual problem of the relationship between the Viceroy in India and his official superior in England. Lord Minto's wisdom and Lord Morley's brilliance presented a combination, the strength of which has rarely been equaled. There has, indeed been a tendency among contemporary writers to do the former less than justice : but a study of the correspondence on both sides clearly shows how often the Viceroy's practical good sense, and knowledge of the world exercised, a guiding influence over the Secretary of State, who, while constantly under the impression that he was getting his own way in all things, generally ended by agreeing with the judgment of his colleague.

The internal condition of India at the time when the Morley-Minto regime commenced was of a nature to cause considerable anxiety to the best friends of the country.

The Indian Nationalist movement, of which we have already marked the rise and progress, began at this time to assume a new aspect. All over the East, the ferment of Western democratic ideas was rapidly spreading ; and the rise of an educated intelligentsia in Persia, China and elsewhere fostered the instinct of Asiatic self-assertion against Western domination. The resounding victory of Japan over Russia reverberated throughout the whole of the East, whose peoples now realized for the first time that the material resources of the West were the common property of all nations who could pay the price. Asia, which for more than a century had lain helpless before the organized science of Europe, perceived the possibility of a renaissance which should secure her from exploitation, and redeem her characteristic cultures from the stigma of inferiority. These broader currents of Asiatic sentiment did not fail to influence in considerable degree the Indian Nationalist movement, gradually modifying it in many directions. In the beginning, as we have noticed, Indian nationalism merely implied a reasoned demand on the part of educated Indians for a share in the direction of their own destinies. This demand took the form of asserting the right of Indians to an increasing share in official appointments ; and the claims of the country to a more liberalized and a more democratic form of Government. But the new spirit of Indian nationalism was different. It was once more aggressive and more enthusiastic. It was no longer content to demand for Indians a share in place and power ; it looked back to the days of India's glory in the past and looked forward to the time when these glories should be renewed in the future. It deprecated that uncritical admiration of all things Western which had for some years animated the educated classes in India ; it commenced to assert the excellence of things Indian as against things British.

At the same time, the older ambitions of the Indian National Congress were enforced and emphasized. Indian sentiment began to demand constitutional reform and a more liberal type of administration as something to which the country was inherently entitled on the score of that new-found sense of nationality which was stirring the hearts of the educated classes.

The popular agitation which had marked the last years of Lord Curzon's administration added immensely to the prestige of the Indian National Congress. Hitherto, this organization, while it had voiced ambitions common to the educated classes all over India, had remained to some degree unrepresentative of many shades of opinion. In particular, it had never appealed to the Muslim community, who distrusted the Parliamentary ideals which they feared, if realized, would place them at the mercy of the Hindu majority. But from this time forward, the Congress was recognized in increasing degree as the focus of national life in the sphere of politics. More significant still, we begin to notice the growth of two parties. On the one hand, there is the section which believes in the co-operation of India and Britain ; in the gradual enlargement of constitutional rights ; in the acquisition through peaceful progress of Indian control over India. On the other hand, we may notice the more extreme party, which is beginning to reject as useless the culture of the West : to assert the superiority of the traditional institutions of India ; and turn its eyes towards the goal of national self-sufficiency ; contemplating with equanimity the severance of the ties binding India to Britain ; and regarding the employment of physical force as an adjunct undesirable indeed but perhaps necessary, to the attainment of its ends.

It was with these two parties that Lord Minto and Lord Morley found themselves compelled to deal. In

Growth of  
Political  
Parties.



Bengal, as a result of the recent partition agitation ;  
 and in Bombay as a result of the nationalist  
 revival in Maharashtra, associated with the  
 name of Mr. B. G. Tilak, the physical force  
 party was strong. It had already begun  
 to employ the bomb and the revolver for the purpose of  
 revolutionary outrage. Elsewhere, the more moderate  
 party under the leadership of such gifted men as  
 Mr. G. K. Gokhale and Sir Pherozesha Mehta, held the  
 predominance. The Liberal Government in England  
 was determined to meet, so far as possible, the legiti-  
 mate aspirations of educated India, but was not prepared  
 to suffer the outrages against law and order perpetrated  
 by the party of physical force. The great majority of  
 Indian politicians realized that the success of the  
 nationalist movement was imperilled by the activities of  
 the extremist section ; in the face of whose daring  
 outrages, all the benevolent intentions of the Liberal  
 Ministry in England were liable to be frustrated.

**The Surat  
Split.**

Accordingly, at the National Congress held  
 at Surat in 1907, a heated dispute broke out  
 between the two sections of nationalist  
 opinion. The upshot was that the moderate section  
 remained in the control of the Indian National Congress ;  
 and for a decade guided its activities in the direction of  
 attaining by constitutional and lawful means a position  
 for India equivalent to that of Canada and other self-  
 governing dominions. But the extremist section, though  
 driven into the wilderness, did not abandon its policy.  
 Murderous attacks were made upon officers of Govern-  
 ment ; and much against its will the Liberal Cabinet in  
 England was compelled to sanction special legislation  
 to meet the campaign of terrorism. The Home Govern-  
 ment were not, however, to be diverted from their  
 intention of favouring the demands of the more moderate  
 section ; and after a considerable amount of discussion,  
 the constitution associated with the names of Lord

Morley and Lord Minto was brought into operation. The Councils established by Lord Cross's Act of 1892 were greatly enlarged and the principle of election was introduced side by side with that of nomination. The membership of the Imperial Legislative Council was increased from 21 to a maximum of 60; while the

The  
Morley-  
Minto  
Reforms.

Legislative Councils of the Provincial Governments were as a rule more than doubled. In the Imperial Legislature an official majority was retained; but in the provincial Councils, non-official members began henceforth to predominate. The powers of the Councils were at the same time considerably increased; so much so indeed, that they presented a superficial appearance of sovereign legislatures. But in point of fact, while they could criticize and influence the administration, they were unable to stop supplies or to turn out a ministry. About the same time, these reforms were supplemented by the appointment of Indian Members to the Viceroy's Executive Council, to the Executive Councils of Bombay and Madras, and to the Secretary of State's Council at the India Office.

The Morley-Minto reforms, though received with appreciation by the moderate party and by the majority of Indian politicians, had certain obvious defects. Even Lord Morley himself

Their  
Limita-  
tions.

disclaimed any intention of erecting a Parliamentary system in India. All he intended to secure was that the administration in its policy should be increasingly guided by Indian opinion as voiced by those in a position to speak for the Indian people. This intention doubtless explains the elaborate arrangements made for representing different classes and minority communities upon a communal basis, which did not by any means facilitate the establishment of the true Parliamentary system which Indian opinion shortly began to demand. Further, 'narrow franchises and'

indirect elections failed to encourage in members a sense of responsibility to the people generally, and made it impossible, except in special constituencies, for those who had votes to use them with perception and effect.' Moreover, while the administration was now far more exposed to examination and criticism than had hitherto been the case, the activities of the non-official representatives were uninformed by that sense of responsibility which can only arise from the prospect of succeeding to office. In other words, the Morley-Minto reforms led directly to a situation in which an irremovable executive would be confronted by an irresponsible legislature.

The difficulties of the new reforms would probably have been obvious at an earlier date, had it not been for two important events. The first was the arrival in India in 1910 of Lord Hardinge of Penshurst; the second was the outbreak of the Great War. Of all Viceroys within living memory, Lord Hardinge commended himself most warmly to the people of India. It was not merely that he stood throughout as the champion of Indian interests; but his sympathetic personality and his gift of placing himself at the head of popular movements combined to win the confidence and affection of all parties. The liberal manner in which he administered the new constitution, together with his fearless championship of the cause of Indians domiciled in South Africa against the Union Government; his success in persuading the British Cabinet to modify the Partition of Bengal—all these procured for him a position of unique influence in the country. They did more. They greatly enhanced the reputation of that section of Indian nationalist opinion which had made peaceful co-operation with Government the principal plank in its platform. The revolutionary party did not, however die out; and the lamentable tale of outrages and murders continued year

year. Even Lord Hardinge himself narrowly escaped assassination in 1912. Nevertheless, on the whole, the constitutional section of Indian opinion began decisively preponderate. When Their Majesties the King and Queen visited India in the winter of 1911, extraordinary demonstrations of loyalty were evoked; and the harmonious atmosphere which the recent reforms had made possible was rendered perceptibly more tranquil. Nevertheless, the limitations of the Morley-Minto reforms became increasingly obvious. The externals of a representative system, without the reality of power, could not for long satisfy even the most moderate-minded of Indian patriots. But before the dissatisfaction had time to assume definite shape, the world was plunged into war.

We cannot dwell in this place upon the magnificent part which India played in the resistance of a large portion of civilization to Germany's attempt to subjugate the world by force. Even in figures alone her contribution is impressive. She sent overseas some 800,000 combatants, and 400,000 non-combatants. She furnished vast supplies of food and war material; she incurred a debt of £150 million. More important even than these contributions to the victory of the Allies was the spirit displayed by the Princes and people of India throughout the struggle. It was plain that the majority of the Indian population had no desire to sever the tie which bound them to Great Britain. A great wave of personal loyalty to the King and Emperor swept over the country; the educated classes laid aside for a moment their dissatisfaction, co-operating heartily with the Government in the endeavour to hasten victory.

But the weary length of the struggle combined with the clear enunciation of democratic ideals on the part of the Allied statesmen, shortly revived in even stronger

form the ambitions of the Indian nationalists. Indian importance as a part of the British Empire became more and more obvious, as Indian representatives were summoned to the War Cabinet and to the Imperial War Conference.

**Stimulates Constitutional Aspirations.** British statesmen, by the enthusiasm of their appreciation for Indian loyalty, raised high the hopes of the nationalist party, whose dreams of self-government and dominion status were immensely encouraged. An active movement for the immediate attainment of Home Rule was set on foot, which attracted a large proportion of the younger men. The party of physical violence, already weakened, disappeared for the moment underground, and the difference between the extreme and the moderate sections of Indian nationalist opinion now resolved itself rather into divergent estimate of the speed with which self-government could in practice be attained, than in a deep-seated difference as to the methods of its attainment. In 1911, both the moderate and the extreme sections united in a meeting of the Indian National Congress held at Lucknow; and the propaganda for immediate Home Rule started under the aegis of Mrs. Besant and Mr. Tilak was officially indorsed. From this moment the moderates, weakened by the deaths of Mr. Gokhale and Sir Pherozeshah Mehta began to lose ground. They had no clear-cut programme to place before the country, and the initiative accordingly passed into the hands of the advanced section, who were committed to the Home Rule campaign. More important still from the standpoint of Indian nationalism, was the compact concluded between the National Congress and the Muslim League. The latter body was an association constituted by leaders of advanced Muhammadan opinion, for securing political concessions of a kind which would safeguard the special interests of Indian Mussalmans. Up to this time, as we

have found occasion to notice the nationalist movement in India had been largely Hindu in inspiration; the Muhammadans as a whole having held themselves aloof. But the spectacle of the recent triumphs of organized Hindu opinion in such matters as the acquisition of constitutional reforms, and the revocation of the Partition of Bengal, impelled the Indian Muhammadans to the conclusion that it was impossible longer to hold themselves aloof from the general current of political progress. Accordingly, in the National Congress of 1916 the progressive sections among both Hindus and Muhammadans, agreed to sink their differences and to present to Government a scheme for further liberalizing the Morley-Minto constitution. The British Cabinet were far from unfriendly; and the widely recognized services of India to the cause of the allies were such as to produce a favourable atmosphere in England.

When Lord Chelmsford succeeded Lord Hardinge in the spring of 1916, it was generally known that further reform of the Indian constitution was under discussion. Unfortunately, the preoccupation of the British Government with the war rendered it impossible to take those speedy measures by which alone Indian nationalist opinion could have been gratified. Delays interposed; natural impatience got the upper hand. The unity between the educated classes and the Government which had been so happy a feature of the early years of war began shortly to suffer; the vehement campaign of propaganda for immediate Home Rule was now punctuated by attacks upon the administration, while all sections, from the physical force party to the representatives of moderation, combined to urge upon Government the necessity for immediate and far-reaching constitutional reform. Unfortunately, in the view of the authorities this Home Rule campaign threatened to interfere with the actual prosecution of the

Lord  
Chelms-  
ford.

Delays  
and im-  
patience.

war; and in June, 1917, its leading protagonist, Mrs. Besant, was interned by the Madras Government. This step at once raised a far-reaching agitation; for Indian nationalists of all shades of political opinion regarded it as a challenge to the legitimacy of India's aspirations for self-government. But in August, 1917, the question was cleared up once and for all by the

The Declaration of August 20th. Right Honourable E. S. Montagu's momentous announcement that the policy of His Majesty's Government was the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire.

As a result of the Secretary of State's tour of enquiry, the Montagu-Chelmsford Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms appeared in the early summer of 1918. A Bill was drafted which, after undergoing careful scrutiny by a joint Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament, received the Royal assent in December, 1919. The new Government of India Act, which laid the foundations of the present Indian constitution, represented a great advance upon the Morley-Minto scheme.

The size of the legislatures, both central and local, was greatly enlarged. In place of the former Imperial Legislative Council, a bi-cameral legislature composed of two Houses styled respectively the Council of State and Legislative Assembly was brought into existence. The Council of State consists of sixty members including the President, of whom 33 are elected and 27 nominated. Among the nominated members not more than 20 may be, but at present only 15 are, officials. The Legislative Assembly consists of 145 members including the President, of whom 104 are elected, and 41 nominated. The nominated members include 26 officials. In the

local legislatures, the proportion of official members has now been fixed at a maximum of 20 per cent; while elected members are required to constitute at least 70 per cent of the total. (The size of the local legislatures has also been enlarged. In Madras, Bombay, Bengal and the United Provinces, the number of members was fixed by statute at a minimum varying from 111 to 125; but in practice these numbers have been generally exceeded. In the Punjab, Bihar and Orissa, and the Central Provinces the statutory minimum varies from 70 to 98. But less important than the increase in the size of the legislatures, is the marked change which has been introduced in their functions. The tendency to devolution, so long fostered both by administrative convenience and by the demands of Indian nationalist opinion, was both exemplified and enforced. The British Parliament and the Government of India now took the first real step towards abrogating their functions in the sphere of provincial administration. The subjects of administration were divided into the categories of Central and Provincial. In the latter were included local self-government, medical administration, public health and sanitation, education, public works and water supply with certain reservations, land revenue administration, famine relief, agriculture, fisheries and forests, co-operation, excise, registration, industrial development, police, prisons, sources of provincial revenue, administration of justice subject to legislation by the Indian Legislature and many miscellaneous items. A large measure of devolution from the central to the local authorities was thus provided. An attempt was made to solve the problem of strengthening the element of popular control by a novel constitutional device. The functions of **Dyarchy**. Government in the provinces were divided into two halves; one still amenable to the British Parliament and the other amenable to an authority, now for the first time called into being, of



Indian electorate of more than five-million voters. The first half of the provincial executives consists of the Governor working with the Executive Councillors nominated by the Crown; the second consists of the Governor working with Ministers whom he selects from elected members of the local legislature. To correspond with this division in the provincial executive, the subjects of provincial administration were divided into two parts, named for convenience "Reserved" and "Transferred." The reserved subjects are administered by the Governor and his Council, responsible to the Government of India and ultimately to the British Parliament. The transferred subjects are administered by the Governor and his Ministers, who are intended to be amenable to the Indian electorate. Among the transferred subjects are included a large number of those administrative functions upon the development of which India's progress depends, such as education, industrial development, local self-government, medical administration and public health, excise, agriculture, fisheries, co-operation, and many other items.

It is difficult for a historian to deny that the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms represent a very great and liberal advance upon any previous constitution which India has known under British rule. Nevertheless, they did not satisfy either the advanced or the moderate sections of Indian opinion. We cannot, in a book of this character, investigate in detail the causes of the dissatisfaction to which the working of the new constitution has given rise; if only for the reason that the events by which this dissatisfaction has been manifested are too recent to admit of their being viewed in the proper historical perspective. For the same reason, we shall not here describe in detail the effects of the post-war weariness which India, in common with the rest of the world, endured after her sacrifices in the cause of victory.

Reception  
of the  
Reforms.

Economic dislocation and political unrest have combined to produce an atmosphere unfavourable to peaceful progress. But whatever the troubles through which India is at present passing, and through which she has yet to pass, the historian may take comfort from the steady progress towards national unity, economic strength and political self-realization which has been described in the preceding pages.

We may terminate this record by reference to three of the more notable features of Lord Chelmsford's Viceroyalty which yet remain to be described. The first is his inauguration of the Chamber of Princes. The growth of the Indian spirit throughout British India and the astonishing progress which that spirit can claim towards the fulfilment of its ideals, has brought prominently to the fore the problem of the Indian Princes. One-third of the Indian soil and one-fifth of the Indian people still continue under the rule of Indian Princes. In the course of the last half century, the Indian States have shared in no small measure in the material progress of British India as a whole. In several of the most advanced States a machinery for consultation between the ruler and his people has been brought into existence. Nevertheless, the centralization of power in the hands of the Princes, and the unique position commanded by dynasties stretching far back into the dim mists of antiquity, combine rigidly to limit the strength of the democratic spirit in Indian State territories. Indeed, in the majority of cases the inhabitants are still content to be ruled at present, as they have been ruled in the past, by Princes sprung from the soil. Nevertheless, the growth of democratic idealism in British India has not left the territories of the Indian Princes untouched. Even though it has taken but little root at present, it has made the rulers class-conscious. There has thus been a

Three  
Notable  
Steps.

The  
Indian  
Princes.

natural tendency on the part of the Indian Princes to draw together in pursuit of a policy of common interest to all. This tendency has been encouraged by the respect and trust in which the Princes, as feudatory allies of His Majesty the King Emperor, are held by the Government of India. It is, therefore, obviously for the convenience of the Princes and of the Government that a regular machinery for consultation should exist. Further, from the point of view of Indian nationalism, it is important that the unique position of the Indian Princes should be adequately appreciated. Only by a system of consultation and deliberation, can the Indian Princes, with their old-time ideals and traditional politics, be fitted into the frame-work of responsible government. It was doubtless these considerations that determined Lord Chelmsford to call into existence the Chamber of Princes, a consultative body of the rulers of the more important Indian States, which meets as a rule once a year and deliberates upon outstanding questions of policy affecting the relations between British India and India under princely rule. It is still too early to foreshadow any particular solution of the relations of the Princes with a self-governing India; but it is not too much to hope that by the exercise of tolerance and patriotism on both sides, a harmonious whole may be brought into existence.

The second of the more important developments of Lord Chelmsford's administration which remain to be considered lies in the sphere of local self-government. We have already noticed the difficulties which attended the working of Lord Ripon's reforms. At the time when Lord Chelmsford became Viceroy, very little progress had been made towards the realization of the ideals which Lord Ripon had laid down. But in view of the importance attached by Lord Chelmsford to constitutional reforms, the problems of local self-government

assumed a new importance. In Western countries, urban and rural self-government constitute the great training ground from which political progress and a sense of responsibility have almost everywhere made their start; and it is not too much to say that the democratic politics of the Anglo-Saxon race have throughout been erected upon the foundation provided by local institutions. Lord Chelmsford's Government determined that the time had come to quicken the advance in this sphere; and to stimulate by every possible means the sense of responsibility in the average citizen. Accordingly, in May, 1918, the Government of India issued a comprehensive resolution which placed the structure of local self-government upon an entirely new footing. The ideals set forth in this resolution were, broadly speaking, those which Lord Ripon had previously enunciated; but they were carried further and what is more important, they were carried into effect. The changes introduced may be briefly summarized. The franchise for the election to local bodies was lowered, in order that the constituencies should be really representative of the electorate. Non-official majorities on the local boards were supplemented by the institution of non-official Chairmen; the authority entrusted to the municipalities and district boards was largely increased, and became for the first time really important. Outside control on the part of the executive Government was reduced to the barest limit compatible with safety; unnecessary restrictions in connection with taxation, budgets, sanction of works and local establishments being removed. As a result of this resolution, a great and rapid change has come upon the structure of local self-government in India. The share which Lord Chelmsford's administration can claim in producing this change has been to some extent obscured by the fact that local self-government became, as a result of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, a subject transferred

entirely to the control of Indian Ministers of the provinces. But the fact remains that the Ministers were enabled to commence their work on a far more favourable basis than would otherwise have been the case.

Last among the notable achievements of Lord Chelmsford's administration must be counted the reorganization of the educational system of India. We have already noticed Lord Curzon's somewhat unhappy ventures in the sphere of educational reform. Very different from this was the work of Lord Chelmsford's administration. The attention of his Government was prominently directed to the unsatisfactory nature of the University education in India by a series of regrettable incidents in connection with Calcutta University. Accordingly, in 1917 a Commission was appointed consisting of leading English and Indian educational experts, with terms of reference which empowered them to investigate relations between University and secondary education, as well as the bearing of University studies upon professional and technological training. The Commission was fortunate in its President; for Sir Michael Sadler was not merely an educationist of remarkably wide experience, but in addition, his personality from the first commanded the respect and affection of educated India. The report of the Calcutta University Commission, made available to the public in August, 1919, is beyond question the most detailed and most authoritative survey of secondary and higher education in India which has ever been made. It suggested a radical reform of secondary education; the separation of pre-University studies from University education in the strict sense of the word; the establishment of the centralized teaching University in place of the affiliating University as the ideal towards which educational policy should be directed. (The most prominent feature of the Commission's report was the stress laid upon the necessity of training up good

## EPILOGUE

### Some Nation Builders

THE limitations of space have prevented us from devoting a due measure of attention to those great personalities whom Indians of the present generation reverence with legitimate pride as the founders of modern India. We can do no more here than recount the names of those whom every student should know and study through the medium of suitable biographies. Such a process does not fall within the strict limits of historical work, the more so that a certain element of political controversy still lingers round many of these names. But no historical sketch of the growth of modern India can claim adequacy, which does not direct the attention of its readers to that factor of personality which must be investigated as a separate study. Among those with whose life-work the student should be familiar are :—

#### POLITICIANS

W. C. Bonnerjee ; Sir Henry Cotton ; Sir William Wedderburn ; Mrs. Besant ; Sir Syed Ahmed ; Mr. G. K. Gokhale ; Sir Pherozeshah Mehta ; Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji ; Mr. B. G. Tilak ; Sir Surendranath Bannerjea ; Mr. B. C. Pal.

#### ARTISTS AND SCIENTISTS

Mr. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee ; Sir Rabindranath Tagore ; Sir J. C. Bose ; Sir P. C. Ray.

#### SOCIAL REFORMERS AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Mr. B. M. Malabari ; Raja Rammohan Roy ; Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya ; Swami Vivekananda ; Lala Lajpat Rai ; Mahatma Gandhi.

Short and handy biographies of most of these are published by Messrs. Natesan of Madras.

citizens, and the importance attached to the radical reform of secondary education, not merely from the standpoint of the professional educationist, but also from the aspect of true national progress. The publication of the report excited the very greatest interest in India. Its reception was eminently favourable. The frank and fair attitude adopted by the Commissioners; their obvious sympathy with Indian national progress; their plain desire to help rather than hinder the growth of democratic elements in the educational structure,—all these served to enlist the co-operation of many patriotic persons. The publication of the Commission's report represents a new landmark in Indian educational history; and it may well be that the future historian will attach at least as much importance to this masterly survey of the whole field of Indian education as to the brilliant document bearing the name of Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford which represents a corresponding survey in the field of politics. A great stimulus has been provided to the leaders of educated India by the frank formulation of the educational problems confronting the country; and by the helpful suggestions put forward as to the methods by which these problems may be solved. Indeed, had Lord Chelmsford's Viceroyalty been notable for nothing else than the report of the Calcutta University Commission, it would nevertheless have been entitled to close attention on the part of the historian.

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